

# HEGEL'S TRANSCENDENTAL ONTOLOGY

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A dissertation submitted to Johns Hopkins University in conformity with  
the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Baltimore, MD  
February, 2016

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## **Abstract**

This dissertation presents an account of the basic schema of Hegel's ontological theory based on a close reading of the key part of his Logic: the Doctrine of the Concept. The careful examination of the internal architectonic of the Hegelian *Concept*, which includes its three moments: the activity of generation of empirical concepts that is guided by the determinations of reflection, the systematically related constellation of empirical concepts, and the objects that are individuated through them as well as the specific type of relation between these moments, demonstrates that the key characteristics of the basic ontological structure stem from Kant. Hence, I conclude that Hegel is presenting a new type of ontology that becomes possible after Kant's Copernican revolution, which rendered the formal structure of the empirical objects of experience grounded on the faculty of understanding. The dissertation suggests that Hegel's Logic can be read as an extended commentary on (or spelling out of the ontological implications from) the famous Kantian claim from the transcendental deduction: the object is in the concept of which manifold is united.

Advisors: Dean Moyar. Readers: Yitzhak Melamed, Hent de Vries  
Katrin Pahl, Jennifer Culbert

## Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my advisor Dean Moyar for the continuous guidance and support of my research, for his patience, encouragement, and immense knowledge. It was his constant insistence on clarity and intellectual rigor that made it possible for me to navigate through the complex twists and turns of Hegel's logic. I could not have imagined having a better advisor.

I thank Yitzhak Melamed for his invaluable insights and continuous support throughout the writing process. Similarly I am grateful to Hent de Vries both for his helpful comments on this work and the inspiring seminars on contemporary European Philosophy that nurtured and reinforced my interest in Hegel. I also would like to thank Katrin Pahl and Jennifer Culbert for their insightful feedback and suggestions on future prospects of my research.

My sincere thanks also goes to Michael Williams, Richard Bett, Eckart Förster, Paola Marrati, Meredith Williams, Peter Achinstein, Steven Gross, and Hilary Bok for the many wonderful classes that shaped my outlook. I'm grateful to Hopkins' Philosophy Department for its intellectual rigor and open spirit that offered an ideal environment for development as a scholar. I thank my fellow graduate students for

their friendship and many inspiring discussions that inform my research through and through.

Last but not the least, I would like to thank my family, my wife Hulya, my mother Nelly, and my sister Khatya for their love and constant supporting throughout the whole process of writing this thesis. Finally, the unique place in my life belongs to my son, Noe Lebanidze, to whom I dedicate this work.

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## **CHAPTER 1: Introduction**

The recent debate over Hegel's philosophy is carried out along the lines of the Kantian-epistemological vs. metaphysical interpretations of his position. Those belonging to the first camp understand Hegel as the figure who brought the Kantian epistemological turn in philosophy to its completion, leaving behind the questions of traditional metaphysics regarding the ultimate structure of reality that underlies the mere appearance and true nature of God, soul, and the world. The general line taken by these commentators is that although Hegel does not stop short of using the terminology of traditional metaphysics (such as God, infinite, absolute etc.), the philosophically significant core of his position is independent of these archaic elements, which therefore can be lifted out of his overall corpus without sustaining any philosophically significant loss. Though not always explicitly acknowledged, these Hegelian scholars stand in the long tradition of rescuing what is alive in Hegel from what is dead and ought to be left behind. The essential kernel of Hegel's system worth rescuing, according to these commentators, is the Kantian transcendental project brought to its completion.

## 1) Pippin

The central figure among the commentators who consider the completion of Kantian transcendental epistemology central to Hegel's legacy is Robert Pippin, whose groundbreaking *Hegel's Idealism*, published in 1989, set a new stage in Hegel scholarship. In the book, Pippin aims to demonstrate that the issues most important to Hegel's project can be traced back to Kantian critical epistemology. Uncovering the Kantian origins of Hegel's philosophy, according to Pippin and his followers, allows us to read Hegel as a post-Kantian epistemologist whose doctrine can be set free of any substantial ontological commitments. This approach allows us to read Hegel's two central works, *Logic* and *Phenomenology*, as investigations within the normative authority of the pure concepts of understanding as the means by which reality can be cognized, and to do so without ascribing to Hegel any substantial commitments regarding the nature of this reality. The image of Hegel that emerges as a result of this account is that of a transcendental epistemologist who replaces the Kantian formal account of the pure concepts of the understanding with a more robust exposition of the conceptual schemata as the medium of making sense of the world while putting aside questions of metaphysical nature.

Pippin's work brought about two invaluable contributions to Hegel scholarship. First, he left behind the hitherto dominant onto-theological readings of Hegel that saw him as a philosopher of the *world-soul* who had reconstructed the problems and issues of traditional metaphysical systems on historicist grounds, but

essentially addressed the very same questions as his rationalist predecessors and offered answers to them from the point of view of God. Second, Pippin made it possible for Hegel to speak to contemporary philosophers by translating his complicated technical vocabulary—such as “in itself vs. for itself,” “infinite being immanent to the finite,” “freedom as being with itself in its other,” etcetera—into a language much more accessible to those schooled in the analytic tradition. From an obscure thinker of only historical value, Hegel was transformed into a figure who has much to offer to those engaged in contemporary debates in epistemology and semantics.

## **2) New traditionalist alternative**

The alternative approach that emerged in the years following the publication of Pippin’s work has reinstated the image of Hegel as a metaphysical thinker. But this is not simply an attempt to go back to any version of the traditional reading that dominated Hegel scholarship prior to the publication of Pippin’s work. What sets these commentators apart from the traditional readings of Hegel, which also ascribed to him a metaphysical position, is that they are elaborated on the background and in contradistinction to Pippin’s Hegel. The most vivid evidence of this is that these commentators take distancing Hegel from Kant as the touchstone for ascribing to him any form of metaphysical view. It is because Pippin and his



followers take the Kantian dimension of Hegel's project as the grounds for advancing a non-metaphysical reading that the new metaphysical interpretations see distancing Hegel from Kant as a necessary condition for a successful execution of their project.

Hence, while Rolf-Peter Horstmann in his work that preceded and considered with the publication of Pippin's book could comfortably present Hegel as upholding certain ontological theory, while at the same time standing within the tradition of the Kantian critical philosophy, the new interpreters like Robert Stern and Brady Bowman clearly feel the need for decoupling Hegel's project from Kant's in order to ascribe to him any substantial ontological commitments. Bowman, for example, writes, "to be a philosopher self-consciously working in the wake of Kant's 'fortunate revolution' is [not] necessarily to be engaged in a project that is continuous with transcendental idealism or one that needs to recognize the peculiar limitations Kant sought to impose on thought. Post Kant is not necessarily proper Kant" (Bowman 2013, 3). For Bowman, the path to demonstrating that Hegel is upholding a metaphysical theory lies in showing that his project diverges radically from Kant's. In the same vein, Stern writes,

Kant may be seen as proposing a dilemma to the traditional ontologist: Either he can proceed by abstracting from the spatio-temporal appearances of things in an attempt to speculate about things as they are in themselves,... ,and get him nowhere with things in themselves; or he can attempt to work with less formal principles, that take into account the spatio-temporal features of things—but then he must accept that he is no longer inquiring into being qua being. (Stern 2009, 15)

Here Stern is drawing two alternative options that were left to choose from after Kant, and he ends up placing Hegel closer to the traditional camp by describing him as having “much greater sympathy for the traditional approach than the Kantian one, which he often presents as a kind of modern faint-heartedness, a falling back from the admirable confidence in the power of thought and reason to take us to the heart of things that the metaphysical tradition... was able to display” (Stern 2009, 9). Clearly, it is due to the depth and breadth of Pippin’s impact on the recent Hegel scholarship that both Bowman and Stern see no other alternative but to decouple Hegel from Kant in order to ascribe to him an ontological theory.

### **3) My Position**

My position is that this debate rests on a false dilemma, as it assumes that the Kantian and metaphysical readings mutually exclude each other. I shall argue that not only is it possible, but in order to do justice to the complexity of his position we must read Hegel as both (a) continuing the Kantian Transcendental project, and (b) advancing a qualitatively new kind of metaphysical (or rather, ontological) theory (having left the traditional pre-critical metaphysics fully behind). I shall use the term *ontology*, rather than *metaphysics*, for reasons that will become clear shortly. This work takes up the task of presenting a detailed account of what I will be

referring to as Hegel's Transcendental Ontology, and it consists of three essential facets.

First, I shall show that the ontological theory Hegel is advancing is fundamentally different from traditional metaphysics, and therefore the recent metaphysical readings advance views that are more misleading than helpful in understanding Hegel's position.

Second, I shall also show that this qualitatively new ontological outlook became possible only after Kant's critical philosophy. In other words, without the Kantian background and the Kantian basic framework integrated within the Hegelian system, the central theses advanced by Hegel's ontological theory would simply not be possible. One way to think of this relation is along the lines of the Kuhnian theory of the establishment of new scientific paradigms that brings along with it new background commitments and assumptions. According to Kuhn, certain scientific theories become possible only after one system of fundamental beliefs and normative assumptions are replaced by another. In the same way, Kantian insights inaugurate something like a paradigm shift that makes the elaboration of Hegelian ontology possible. The Kuhnian analogy can also be helpful in further explicating the difference between traditional metaphysics and Hegelian ontology. Although both are views about the ultimate nature of reality and, upon first glance, the Hegelian model might appear as one more theory amongst the many that had been formulated before him, once more carefully examined, it becomes apparent that we are dealing with a radical transformation of the most fundamental aspects of the

traditional view. For example, the central concept of ontology, *being*, has been described in the Hegelian doctrine and traditional metaphysic as identical to *thought*, but the claim of *identity* between the two sides is radically different according to the traditional and the Hegelian ontology. To use the Kuhnian terminology, as a result of the paradigm shift, we are responding to a different world and the shift was initiated by the Kant's Copernican turn. Hence, spelling out the Kantian origins of this transformation and taking a close look at its details will be one of the central tasks of my undertaking here.

Finally, the ultimate goal of the project is to present a detailed account of the ontological model upheld by Hegel. It is in the Doctrine of the Concept, and specifically in the Syllogism section, where Hegel presents the most fundamental account of his conception of actuality. Therefore, a close analysis of these parts of the *Logic* will be the central task undertaken in what follows. As is, we shall see that the detailed presentation of the basic underpinnings of Hegelian ontology will serve as the most conclusive confirmation of the above two points as well. It is only after a comprehensive account of Hegel's vision of actuality is brought to light can we fully appreciate both its indebtedness to Kant and the extent to which it departs from traditional metaphysical theories.

## 4) Pippin's & My Readings

The interpretation that I'll be offering here is inspired by Pippin's Kantian reading of Hegel. I agree with the overall thrust of Pippin's approach regarding the Kantian origins of Hegel's system, as well as the rejection of the traditional metaphysical model that follows from this. To do the contrary and position Hegel close to the pre-Kantian metaphysic means, as my discussion shall make clear, to fail to appreciate the revolutionary nature of his position and to relegate him to history as a "premodern anachronism." Hence, I agree with Pippin's claim that "Hegel's speculative position...his theory of the Absolute Idea, his claim that such an Idea alone is 'what truly is' could be interpreted and defended in a way that is not committed to a philosophically problematic theological metaphysics"(Pippin 1989, 5). Indeed, as laying out the detailed picture of Hegel's position shall make evident, one has to fundamentally misunderstand the Hegelian basic conceptual framework to see him as pursuing a project similar to traditional metaphysics. But at the same time, to claim that Hegel is not committed to "a philosophically problematic theological metaphysics" is not the same as to claim that he is not upholding any ontological stance at all. To claim that it is the absolute idea that "what truly is," as Hegel does according to Pippin, means to take up certain ontological commitments. If this claim has any meaning at all, it belongs to the sphere of ontology.

I also agree with Pippin's broad-brush outline of the formula for "getting Hegel from Kant":

Keep the doctrine of pure concepts and the account of apperception that helps justify the necessary presupposition of pure concepts, keep the critical problem of a proof for the objectivity of these concepts, the question that began critical philosophy, but abandon the doctrine of 'pure sensible intuition,' and the very possibility of a clear distinction between concepts and intuitions, and what is left is much of Hegel's enterprise. (Pippin 1989, 9)

And Pippin's *Hegel's Idealism* indeed presents a comprehensive application of this formula through the detailed analysis of Hegel's two central texts, *The Phenomenology* and *the Logic*.

The approach I'm taking in this work is more modest. Instead of presenting a comprehensive account of Hegel's corpus, I shall almost exclusively focus on those few sections of his *Logic* that I consider to be essential for understanding the basic principle of his position. It is through the identification of the Kantian footprints on this fundamental level of his system that the claim of continuity between the projects of the two philosophers will be made.

## **5) Brandom**

Another important figure amongst the non-metaphysical interpreters of Hegel is Robert Brandom, who alongside Pippin reads Hegel as pursuing the Kantian project, but sees him as best understood when projected onto the plane of problems

and issues of semantics. In his paper “Sketch of a Program for a Critical Reading of Hegel,” Brandom suggests to read Hegel as advancing a two-tiered semantic theory that discriminates between the logical vs. empirical (ordinary or non-logical) concepts. Clearly, the move is directly emanating from the Kantian distinction between the logical forms of judgment and the categories on the one hand, and the empirical concepts on the other.

According to Brandom, while the ordinary determinate concepts “make explicit how the world is,” the logical ones “make explicit the process by which determinate content is conferred on or incorporated in the ground-level empirical and practical concepts” (2004). He wants to replace the monistic metaphysics that used to be traditionally ascribed to Hegel with a semantic holism, according to which empirical concepts taken together with the inferential relation between them and the doxastic commitments in which they are employed form an interrelated holistic system. Hence, judgment, wherein a single element of a given constellation is employed, is mediately related to the systematic whole; and an endorsement of a new judgment is mirrored in a modification of the conceptual content of the totality of the system. Besides, a modification of a conceptual content of any given element of the system will have its impact on the potential or actual judgment made by means of the other elements of the given schema.

I agree with Brandom in his delineation between the logical and the empirical concepts, as well as his view regarding their relation to one another. The former, instead of serving as the medium through which the world is made manifest

to the mind, constitutes the schemata that determines the relation between empirical concepts and guides the process of their formation. Logical concepts, according to Brandom, comprise a set of meta-concepts that, instead of telling us about how the world is, tell us about the processes of formation of the concepts, which tell us how the world is. Much of the analysis of Hegel's ontological theory that follows will be carried out with this Brandomian distinction in mind. As we shall see, through the analysis of some key passages from the Doctrine of Essence and the Doctrine of the Concept, Hegel presents an account of this onto-logical structure grasped on different levels: first, as an elaboration of the elements of this set of concepts in the doctrine of essence; and later, in the doctrine of the concept, on the structural relation that guides the process of their application and also expresses the architectonics of the system of empirical concepts formed through this process. The empirical, or ordinary, concepts are different from the system presented in Hegel's onto-logical account in that they are necessarily unstable and incomplete; they undergo a continuous process of revision and reformulation of their meaning. According to Brandom, any set of empirical concepts, through the process of their application in empirical judgments and the clarification of the inferential relations between them, will be necessarily driven to contradiction—this is what he calls the *semantic pessimism* of Hegel as he reads him. Hence, if in the case of the logical concepts their exhaustive account is presented by Hegel in his *Logic*, the analogous set of the empirical concepts is in principle impossible.

Brandom, like Pippin before him, opens up a new dimension in which Hegel's philosophy can be approached, by pointing to a complex framework present within



the Hegelian corpus that needs to be further fleshed out and elaborated in greater detail. The discussion that follows will be dedicated to the analysis of the key passages from *Logic*, in which Hegel presents elements of this framework. One important aspect of the project I'm undertaking here is to present a detailed account of several key elements of what Brandom calls *the system of Hegel's logical concepts*. Besides having a great exegetic value in rendering accessible some of the murkiest parts of Hegel's corpus, this Brandomian approach will also serve as a demonstration of the futility of attempts to tie Hegel's stance with the traditional pre-Kantian metaphysics, as the system of logical concepts uncovered through this analysis are obviously related to the logical forms of judgment on which Kant grounded his pure concepts of the understanding. This is one more clear evidence that the Hegelian system is elaborated within the post-Kantian paradigm, and any attempts to reduce its problematic to those dealt by the pre-critical tradition is destined to fail in doing justice to it. At the same time, it will also become evident that the position put forth is not free of certain specific kind of ontological claims—ontology not in the traditional sense but in the post-Kantian sense of the word. In fact, I hope to show that the Brandomian approach best realizes its potential when embedded in the overall context of reading Hegel's project as transcendental ontology.

## 6) Pippin and Brandom: Pros and Cons

Pippin's and Brandom's non-metaphysical readings have two decisive advantages over the traditional approach that places Hegel closer to the pre-critical metaphysicians than to Kant. First, only against the Kantian backdrop is it possible to make sense of the large part of Hegel's logic that deals with the essential core of his philosophical system—his doctrine of the essence and the doctrine of the concept. Only with the Kantian theory of the logical functions of judgment comprising the transcendental structure that guides the activity of the mind on which the object is grounded does it become possible to make sense of what Hegel is doing in the Doctrine of the Essence—what kind of meaning could the numerous claims like these have, “Determinate being is merely posited being or positedness” and “positidness is a determination of reflection” (WL 406), that Hegel makes without the Kantian backdrop and within any traditional metaphysical system? Or, again, without the Kantian thesis that object is in the concept of which the manifold is united, what could be meant by the Hegelian claim that *everything actual is the concept*? It is the Kantian transcendental turn that posits the ground based on which the theory that grants to the determinations of reflection the constitutive role for the actuality as is done in the doctrine of the essence. Any serious interpretation of Hegel's *Logic* has to acknowledge that what Hegel is doing there is clearly geared to the completion of the project that Kant characterized as the Copernican revolution in philosophy.

Secondly, Pippin and Brandom demonstrated how much potential the Kantian readings have when it comes to re-enlivening Hegel's philosophy and making it relevant to contemporary problems and debates in epistemology, semantics, ethics, etcetera. Once these strengths of the Kantian interpretations are brought to the fore, the backward-looking traditional readings that discard the liveliest aspects of Hegel's thought lose all the appeal.

At the same time, Pippin's and Brandom's attempts to maintain neutrality with respect to ontology contribute very little to the strength of their positions. This resistance to embrace what clearly has plenty of textual evidence is a remnant of once-dominant dogma in the Anglophone academic philosophy regarding the complete rejection of metaphysics. One significant current in this overall approach, which probably had influenced Pippin and Brandom, originates in the Quinian privileging of epistemology over ontology. Quine, in his influential paper, "On What There Is," argued that it is possible to isolate epistemological and semantic concerns from the ontological commitment and to formulate epistemological theory, i.e., theory about the *cognition* of reality, while having bracketed the question of what this reality is like. But a careful examination of Quine's stance reveals that instead of staying neutral regarding ontological commitments, he is simply presupposing a basic Cartesian kind of dualistic ontology.

In a similar way, the shadow of the Cartesian type of dualistic ontology is following the non-metaphysical readings of Hegel. By neglecting the issue or attempting to stay neutral regarding ontological commitments and focusing instead

on epistemological and semantic problems, a risk emerges of inadvertently enforcing an ontological outlook utterly different from that of Hegel. Ontological backdrop seems to me to be a necessary condition for the elaboration of any epistemological or semantic theory. To put forth, for example, a theory of knowledge, as a minimum one has to answer the question of what kind of thing is that which is known, that which knows, and what form of being does knowledge as such have. By ignoring these questions, we are not obviating the need for answering them; instead, we are actually answering them implicitly. Brandom's claim that "good reasons to endorse a strong holism concerning the senses (*but not referents*) of ordinary determinate concepts do not oblige one to adopt a corresponding thesis concerning the contents expressed by the logical and philosophical meta-vocabulary we use to discuss and explicate those ground-level concepts" (Brandom 2004, 3), where he describes the sense of different conceptual sets and contrasts them with their referents, has a clear dualistic ontological implication of a Cartesian or Fregean kind. Also, Pippin's claim that Hegel's position "is not an attack on the possibility of an extraconceptual reality 'in itself', but on the internal coherence of the notion of such an object as an object of thought" (Hegel's *Idealism* 200) can be interpreted as accepting a dualistic ontological background. The bottom line is that there is no epistemology or semantics possible without a corresponding ontological commitment, and by merely pretending that we can interpret Hegel in this way we are undermining the force and originality of his thought and might be unwittingly ascribing him a kind of ontology outlook that goes in direct contradiction with the one to which Hegel was himself committed.

## 7) Kantian Ontology

Neither does the Kantian reading of Hegel bar us from acknowledging the ontological view present in his system. When Kant offers supplanting the proud ontology by an analytic of the pure understanding, “the proud name of an ontology, which presumes to offer synthetic a priori cognition of things in general in a systematic doctrine (e.g., the principle of causality), must give way to the modest one of a mere analytic of the pure understanding” (A247/B303), he is not simply rejecting ontology as such. Kant is not denying here that we can have some form of knowledge about the nature of being, as the entire transcendental analytic is nothing else but an exposition of the constitutive factors of the empirical reality. What he is rejecting is the basic ontological assumptions of the tradition preceding him. Kant abandons the idea of the possibility of science of the basic determinations of being that renders for us accessible the true nature of reality, or, to put it in his terms, the synthetic a priori knowledge of the noumenal world underlying the phenomenal realm. In other words, what Kant is saying here is not that ontology is not possible, but that it is not possible in the way the pre-critical tradition conceived it and, therefore, it ought to be replaced by a new type of enquiry into the nature of being for which the analysis of the power of the understanding plays the central role.

The new type of ontology that becomes possible as a result of the Kantian revolution puts aside the task of investigating the nature of transcendent being and turns to the investigation of the nature of phenomenal reality and the power of the understanding as its constitutive element. Essentially, the fundamental claim of the new Kantian ontology is made in the famous passage from the transcendental deduction—the object is in the concept of which manifold is united. The spelling out and justification of the structure of the unification and the forms involved with this unity is largely the central task of the Transcendental Analytic of *The Critique of Pure Reason*. Hence, the Kantian approach emerges as the polar opposite of the Quinian one—instead of privileging epistemology over ontology, it is the other way around: the empirical objects are cognizable, i.e., we can be epistemological optimists regarding the spatio-temporal objects because they are furnished by the cognitive structure of the transcendental apperception. It is the transcendental ontology that grounds Kant's epistemology, not vice versa. This is the guiding thread that Kant formulates in the Introduction to *The Critique of Pure Reason* when claiming that “reason has insight only into what it itself produces according to its own design” (B XIII).

The two different ways of thinking of ontology have the corresponding two senses in which Kant uses the word *metaphysics*. The first one is related to the old tradition that he exposes as the dreams of reason, and the other to the contribution that reason makes to the constitution of experience. Hence, on the one hand metaphysics is a study of the unconditioned that lies behind the conditioned, or the apparent reality, and is the source of all meaning. This is the conception of

metaphysics that Heidegger traced as emerging in Plato's philosophy; with this development, according to him "the change in the essence of truth, a change that becomes the history of metaphysics" is taking place (Heidegger 1998, 181). Truth becomes correspondence between assertion and being interpreted as idea, and the history of metaphysics as the search of this eternal unchanging truth takes its origins here.

Plato himself concretely illustrates the basic outline of metaphysics in the story recounted in the "allegory of the cave." In fact, the coining of the word 'metaphysics' is already prefigured in Plato's presentation. In the passage (516) that depicts the adaptation of the gaze to the ideas, Plato says (516 c3): Thinking goes *beyond* those things that are experiences in the form of mere shadows and images, and goes *out towards* these things, namely, the "ideas." (Heidegger 1998, 180)

This is the conception of metaphysics that Kant calls "worm-eaten dogmatism" (A X) and he thinks of it as left behind for good by his critical philosophy.

But Kant also uses the word *metaphysics* in a different sense and talks about "a metaphysics that has been purified through criticism" (B XXIV), the metaphysics that directs its gaze not "beyond those things that are experiences" but investigates the immanent structure of the experienced reality itself that makes this very experience and cognition of the things experienced possible. One way to describe the effects of Kant's critical philosophy on metaphysics is a transformation of metaphysics into transcendental ontology. In medieval philosophy, the investigation of the nature and origins of the unconditioned supersensible reality—the heirs of the Platonic Ideas—came to be known as *metaphysica specialis*, to be contrasted

with the science of being qua being that was concerned with the basic categories of being (*metaphysica generalis*). As such, the way it was conceived before Kant, metaphysics had to offer a two-tiered ontological account or two kinds of ontology: on the one hand the science of being of the transcendent substances, which we can call transcendent ontology, and on the other hand an account of the nature of ordinary objects of experience that were deemed as “mere shadows” of the underlying true reality. With Kant’s Copernican revolution, the entire undertaking of the *metaphysica specialis* is rendered futile, as so is the part of *metaphysica generalis* that we have called transcendent ontology. The only viable option for metaphysical investigation is the enquiry into the nature of experience, which, considering Kant’s definition of the term “transcendental” as the “our mode of cognition of objects insofar as this is to be possible a priori” (A11/B25), I shall call *transcendental ontology*. Hence, with Kant, two fundamental changes take place: a) the basic categories of being are traced back to the cognitive constitution of subject, and b) the scope of these categories is confined to experience. Therefore, the domain of metaphysics is reduced to laying out the complete account of the elements immanent to experience but not originating in it, hence available to reason prior to experience via its self-examination. Thus, we can say that the metaphysics is essentially reduced to transcendental ontology. As we shall see, Hegel significantly modifies Kant’s original project. The central aspects of this change are overcoming the Kantian psychologism that confines the limits of reason to certain rules of activity of the mind. But essentially, his theory retains the overall Kantian contours.



## 8) Traditionalist readings

While according to the interpretation I'll be offering here, the Kantian readings of Hegel are mostly right, the opposite side—the traditional readings—is mostly misguided. The shared mistaken assumption of Bowman and Stern is that reading Hegel as engaged in some forms of traditional metaphysics is a necessary condition for ascribing to him any ontological views. Therefore, in spite of the many insightful and interesting aspects of their interpretations, they end up advancing a picture of Hegel that is fundamentally misconstrued. Hegel's position cannot be reduced to a form of Aristotelian metaphysics as Stern does, nor can his arguments be illuminated by translating them into the scholastic vocabulary (of formal vs. objective reality) as Bowman ends up doing, and the reason for this is that Hegel's ontology is post-Kantian through and through. Once more, the difference between them can be seen as a difference between two scientific theories divided by a paradigm shift. To use the Kuhnian analogy again, just like the mass before and after the elaboration of the theory of relativity means fundamentally different things (even though on a superficial level it might appear identical), so the basic elements of the conceptual framework—for example, being, contradiction, concept—have fundamentally different meanings in the Hegelian vs. the traditional ontology.

## 8.1) Bowman

Bowman, in his *Hegel and Metaphysics of Absolute Negativity*, claims “Hegel is committed to a rationalist tradition in Western philosophy that stretches from Anaxagoras to Leibniz and Wolff and which teaches the unboundedness of scientific knowledge” (Bowman 2013, 28). On the other hand, Bowman sees Kant as waging an attack on the identity of “being and intelligibility” (Bowman 2013, 26) and therefore undermining the unboundedness of scientific knowledge. Hence, Hegel’s philosophical undertaking is framed as aiming to resuscitate the “the chief casualty of this [Kantian] attack on rationalism [which] was traditional metaphysics and its commitments to the knowability of the unconditioned, of being as it is in itself” (Bowman 2013, 28). Kant and Hegel are placed by Bowman on the opposite sides of the divide—Kant as a critic and Hegel as a defender of traditional metaphysics. My analysis of Hegel’s relation to both Kant and traditional metaphysics will make clear that this is a mistaken approach.

In Chapter 2 I shall explicate Hegel’s criticism of the rationalist tradition, which makes it evident that he upheld a fundamentally different model of relation between “being and intelligibility” from that of the pre-Kantian metaphysicians. Moreover, the crucial point of the difference between theirs and Hegel’s position is what he inherited from Kant: the investigation of the grounds of identity of being and intelligibility. The thread that connects Kant’s undertaking with Hegel’s is not the issue of unintelligibility of transcendent being or unknowability of things-in-themselves as Bowman would have it, but the investigation of the conditions of knowledge of empirical reality, identifying the ground on which the relation between

(empirical) being and intelligibility rests. Hegel takes the thing-in-itself and the problems associated with it as a peripheral husk of Kant's philosophy, and is quite explicit about this. What he finds to be the most valuable in Kant is his revolutionary insights about the nature of the relation between the cognizing subject, the cognized object, and the structure of cognitive relation between them; and it is as the result of pursuing this Kantian project further that Hegel arrives at the conclusions about "the unboundedness of scientific knowledge" and the "identity of being and intelligible." Therefore, Hegel should be understood not as performing a miracle and bringing back to life "the chief casualty" of Kant's critical attack as Bowman sees it, but placing the last nails in the coffin and putting it to rest.

As we shall see, Hegel describes the confidence of traditional metaphysics in the knowability of reality as naïve and this is a pivotal difference between theirs and Hegel's position that Bowman ignores. It is true that Hegel is sympathetic to the commitment of traditional metaphysics to the identity of being and intelligibility, but sees this strength as resting on its naïveté and, on the other hand, the potential for overcoming of which he sees in the Kantian transcendental project. One way to read Hegel's entire philosophical project is as an undertaking for substituting a rational justification for this naïve, unreflected presupposition. But Bowman ignores this crucial difference, instead focusing on those points of Hegel's criticism of the pre-Kantian metaphysicians that are neutral in relation to Kant's devastating attack on the tradition and can be maintained on the grounds independent of this attack. Thus Bowman writes: "For him[Hegel], pre-critical metaphysics come to signify any attitude towards reality which takes the categories of traditional ontology (a) as the

exclusive and irreducible forms of objective cognition and (b) as the basic forms of the substantially real itself" (58). Bowman is right. Hegel does voice criticism along these lines in the introduction to the *Encyclopedia Logic* as we shall see below. But we shall also see that for Hegel these mistakes arise from the more fundamental problem in the stance adopted by traditional metaphysics—its failure to see the need for the justification of identity of being and thought. The root of the problem is not that these commitments of the tradition are *incorrect* assumptions, but that they are *mere assumptions* and are problematic not only because they don't present the nature of reality on the most fundamental level, but more because the tradition does not see any need for presenting justification for them. It is this justification of the accessibility of being (although of only empirical nature) by intelligibility that is supplied by Kant, and this is what renders Hegel's project akin to his and miles away from the traditional metaphysics.

Although the insufficient appreciation of the Kantian dimension in Hegel is a weaker side of Bowman's reading, there are many aspects of his work that are undoubtedly important contributions to recent Hegel scholarship. One of these is Bowman's analysis of the dualistic aspect of the Hegelian notion of the *concept*. Drawing on the influential works of Rolf Horstmann and Dieter Henrich, Bowman presents an interesting account of the underpinnings of Hegel's ontological theory. The *static* ontological structure that grounds all finite determination is taken up by Bowman from Horstmann's analysis of the Hegelian relational monism in his *Ontologie und Relationen* and is integrated with the *dynamic* account of the very same structure that he adopts from Henrich's work. These accounts, one static and

the other dynamic, are two sides of the same coin according to Bowman, and only with keeping this dual aspect of the Hegelian understanding of the *concept* can we get an adequate grasp of his ontological theory.

Bowman discusses the relation-to-self that includes as its immanent moment the relation-to-other as the fundamental feature of the relational structure of the Hegelian *Concept*; and in order to demonstrate how this relational structure underlies the finite thought-determinations, he offers the relation between *identity*, *difference*, and *ground*. Bowman maintains that “the finite thought determinations identity, difference, and ground are shown to have no proper content of their own. They are strictly speaking only different aspects of or perspectives on a single, complex rational structure” (Bowman 2013, 40-41). He wants to show that the interrelatedness of these determinations—identity, difference, ground—exemplify the immanence of the relation-to-other to the relation-to-self, and ultimately all these determinations are elements of the single complex relational structure. But his account is not very convincing—although the general idea he is developing is correct (the self-relational structure is the basic schema that incorporates other determinations in it), the specific determinations he presents to exemplify this structure are not suited to do it properly. While claiming to present the self-relational structure in its entirety, Bowman is actually looking at only a limited subset of the determinations that comprise it. In order to put forward a more comprehensive account, Bowman had to look at *The Doctrine of the Concept* and its relational schemata, which Hegel presents in the syllogism section, but unfortunately Bowman stops on the level of *The Doctrine of Essence*. As my

discussion in Chapters 3–5 shall demonstrate, Brandom’s programmatic sketch is pointing to a more promising direction in laying out the basic relational structure operating in Hegel’s ontological theory.

Bowman’s discussion of the dynamic moment of the Hegelian ontological substructure, *the autonomous negation*, heavily relies on Dieter Henrich’s work. He wants to supplement the above-outlined static relational structure with an active, creative function: “In Henrich’s phrase, Hegel ‘authorizes’ negation and makes it to serve as the unique basic term from which to derive all other logical determinations and indeed his whole system” (Bowman 2013, 50). In order to avoid possible misinterpretations, Bowman explains that the dynamic account presented should not be taken to be anything different from the already outlined static relational structure:

the Concept and absolute negativity are two sides of a single ‘speculative’ coin, one structural, one dynamic; and their unity is at the same time the unity of Hegelian metaphysics and methodology. For just as the concept cannot be adequately understood except as the structural expression of absolute negativity, neither can the methodology of Hegelian science be understood except as the finite intellect’s recreation of *Nachvollzug* of the same dynamic that constitutes Hegel’s monist metaphysics of subjectivity, the concept (Bowman 2013, 56)

The activity, or *the autonomous negation*, is supposed to be tracing the exact same formal structure of the Concept that was laid out in the static form earlier. Hence, the immanence of the relation-to-other to the relation-to-self is to be confirmed in terms of autonomous negativity. But Bowman’s account of the identity between the

two sides again falls short of being convincing, and again the reason is that Bowman's account only scratches the surface of the problem without descending to the most fundamental level where the identity between the relational structure and active creative power are treated as the identity between the two moments of the *Concept* as exposed in the Syllogism section of the Subjective Logic. Hence, while I agree with Bowman's overall approach regarding the two aspects reading of the underpinnings of the Hegelian ontology, I do not think his account of this identity does justice to Hegel's position. As my discussion in Chapter 5 shall show, without a detailed exposition of the moments of the concept and the relations between them that Hegel spells out in the Syllogism section, any account of the identity of the static and dynamic moments of the concepts will be insufficient.

One more interesting theme that Bowman brings up in his book but does not develop far enough is the relation between the categories and the fundamental ontological substructure. He simply identifies the uncovering of the latter by Hegel with the rejection of the fundamentality of the former:

in reducing the categories of *metaphysica generalis* to determinations of the Concept, and thus reformulating their content in terms of a structure that they either fail entirely to exhibit in their ordinary employment or at best succeed in exhibiting only in an inadequate way, Hegel is effectively transforming the ordinary meaning of those categories (Bowman 2013, 42)

Bowman ultimately renders the categories as dispensable elements of secondary importance that can be spared once the more fundamental account which grounds them is attained: "in principle, we could dispense with such terms and hence with

any reference at all to the traditional content associated with those terms, and instead grasp the content of the *Logic* purely as a tightly ordered sequence of iterations of the basic structure of the Concept” (Bowman 2013, 42). In Chapter 5, I shall show that Hegel’s position is more complex, as well as more interesting, than a mere rejection of the categories for the sake of the relation between relation-to-self and relation-to-other as Bowman would have it. Here, just as in the above-discussed case, a close analysis of the Syllogism section and the Subjective Logic in general is the key—without paying sufficient attention to the part of the text where Hegel lays out the most fundamental substructure of his ontological vision, it is not possible to present an adequate account of this substructure.

## 8.2) Stern

Robert Stern, in his influential interpretation of Hegel as a metaphysician, tries to be more attentive to the presence of the Kantian current in Hegel’s thought. He acknowledges that much of what motivated Hegel’s philosophical ambitions in his early years emanated from Kant’s critical philosophy, but ultimately Stern also sees a mature Hegel giving up the transcendental approach and adopting the stance of traditional metaphysics.

if we do think of Hegel as engaging in ‘proud ontology’ once more, we do not have to see him doing so forgetfully, as it were, as if deaf to all Kant’s concerns and ignorant of the Kantian position; but we don’t therefore have to think of him as in some sense taking Kant’s transcendental alternative either. Rather, we can see him as engaging with it seriously, but finding it



wanting in crucial respects, which in turn led him to see ways in which the traditional picture remains of value. (Stern 2009, *How is Hegelian Metaphysics Possible*, 29)

Stern thinks that Hegel came to find his way out of the Kantian problematic of the formal conditions of the possibility of experience and turned to investigation of the “being qua being” as it was done by the pre-critical metaphysicians. Stern, like Bowman, is right in that Hegel advances an ontological theory, but this does not commit him to returning to the pre-critical metaphysics.

One of the central aims of my dissertation is to demonstrate that instead of rejecting the Kantian route, Hegel develops it further and arrives at a theory of being—but not simply as *being qua being*, but rather as *being qua being as thought* and ultimately being and thought as both grounded in what he calls *the Concept*. In other words, the way I read it, the path toward the Hegelian ontology lies not alongside the traditional problems of the pre-critical metaphysics, but through the Kantian transcendental philosophy. This will be made evident through the careful analysis of Hegel’s examination of the respective positions of traditional metaphysics and Kant in the Introduction to *The Encyclopedia Logic*, which I will undertake in Chapter 2. But the most conclusive evidence for the Kantian origins of Hegel’s ontology can be provided only with a comprehensive account of its fundamental underpinnings, and as my examination of this ontological substructure through the close reading of the Syllogism section will reveal, the Hegelian position to its most minute details is a development of the Kantian project and all its pivotal elements emanate from Kant’s transcendental philosophy. Hence, when we attempt

“finding [our] way out of Kantian problematics,” (as Hegel does according to Stern) we also end up finding our way out of the Hegelian solutions to this problematics.

Stern’s placing of Hegel closer to traditional metaphysics than to Kant at least in part arises out of his misinterpretation of Kant’s position. He sees Kant as advancing what he calls *a bundle theory of the object*: “the Kantian model of the object therefore remains essentially pluralistic in character, as the unity of the object is reducible to a complex of more basic and intrinsically unrelated entities (the manifold of intuitions) out of which the object is constructed” (Stern 1990, 3). While Hegel, according to Stern, “frees the unity of the object from the synthesizing activity of Kant’s transcendental subject; for, on Hegel’s account (to put it simply), the object does not need to be organized or unified by us, because, as the exemplification of a substance-universal, it is no longer treated as reducible to the kind of atomistic manifold that requires this synthesis” (Stern 1990, 5).

For now, I’m putting aside the problems with Stern’s interpretation of Hegel’s conception of the object and I shall address it in Chapter 4. Presently I would like to briefly point to the obvious problem with Stern’s understanding of the Kantian notion of the object, which stands in clear contradiction to Kant’s central thesis from the Transcendental Deduction about the nature of the object: “an object is that in the concept of which the manifold of a given intuition is united” (B137). Note that Kant is not asserting that the object is the *manifold* of intuitions that are united by the concept, as Stern would have it, but exactly the opposite; it is the concept that is the rule of the synthesis that plays the fundamental role in the

constitution of the object. The difficulties with Stern's view will become even more apparent in Chapter 4, in which I will be taking a closer look at the Kantian understanding of the empirical concepts and their objects, and will spell out in greater detail the meaning of Kant's claim that object is grounded on the universal rule of combination and is not reducible to the sensible manifold. On the other hand, the logical functions of judgment that serve as the most basic rules of this combination have their presence in the schemata that we encounter in Hegel's theory of the relational structure immanent to his notion of the concept—the one he expounds in the Syllogism section of the Subjective Logic. Hence, Kant and Hegel don't stand as far away in this respect as Stern would like to convince us.

Stern places Hegel not only too far from Kant, but also too close to Aristotle. He wants to ascribe to Hegel a vision of reality like that of Aristotle, where forms are posited as the immanent substratum of the individuals that determines its structure and development and expresses what the given individual most truly is: "Hegel argues, along Aristotelian lines, that properly conceived, the individual is an irreducible substance and this irreducibility is explained by virtue of its being of such and such kind ... the manifestation of a universal substance-form" (Stern 1990, 4). No doubt there is a strong Aristotelian current in Hegel's thought, and indeed as we shall see, the reading of Hegel's notion of the *universal* on the Aristotelian background makes it more easily accessible than is often taken to be. However, to simply describe them as upholding the same or even similar views about the nature of the substance-forms play in the constitution of objective reality is a gross simplification. In Chapter 5 I shall demonstrate that Hegel's model of the relation

between the universal, particular, and individual is very different from Aristotle's. In fact, in the Syllogism section Hegel presents an ontological model that is an Aristotelian one; but he rejects and moves on toward articulating his own vision of reality. Hence, the analysis that follows will demonstrate the nature of similarity, as well as its limits and extent of difference between the Aristotelian and Hegelian ontologies.

In the following chapter I undertake a close analysis of Hegel's criticism of traditional metaphysics, empiricism, and Kant as it is presented in the *Vorbegriff* Section (translated as Preliminary Conception) of Hegel's *Encyclopedia Logic*. The idea behind this strategy is to locate the central points of Hegel's stance in relation to the alternative positions that are more readily accessible for contemporary philosophers. Since the technical vocabularies of the doctrines he considers are more familiar for us, the *Vorbegriff* section offers a helpful entry point in the Hegelian system. By identifying the aspects of the alternative ontological models Hegel finds problematic and the perspective from which he voices his criticism, we can learn much about his own standpoint. In Chapter 3 I look at the determinations of reflection presented by Hegel in *The Doctrine of Essence* and show that they are the basic functions guiding the empirical concept generating activity, the universal moments of the Hegelian Concept. I demonstrate that the determinations of reflection that include identity, difference, diversity, opposition, and contradiction correspond to the concepts of comparison (or concepts of reflection) from Kant's *Amphiboly* section of *The Critique of Pure Reason* and in the end to the logical functions of judgment from which the concepts of comparison stem from. Hence I

show that the *modus operandi* of the universal moment of the Hegelian Concept is borrowed from Kant's critical system. The subsequent two chapters are dedicated to the close reading of *The Doctrine of the Concept* itself. First Chapter 4 presents a detailed account of the three moments of this Hegelian fundamental ontological structure: universality, particularity, and individuality as the components of the inner architectonics of the Concept. Finally in Chapter 5, I look at the different models of mediation between the three moments of the Concept that Hegel considers and trace the progression toward his own conception of the nature of their relation. As we shall see, the moments are not merely related to one another, but their relation has the nature of self-relation—one more feature that ties the Hegelian Concept with Kantian transcendental apperception. The close examination of the inner architectonics of the fundamental structure of Hegel's ontological theory demonstrates that its basic characteristics are stemming from Kant.

## CHAPTER 2: Hegel's Critique of Alternative Positions

Any serious attempt to reconstruct Hegel's ontology faces a formidable challenge to translate his complex technical vocabulary into a language more easily accessible to contemporary philosophers and then to interpret within this idiom such bold and enigmatic-sounding claims as "everything actual contains opposite determinations," "everything actual is rational," "everything is concept," "the true is the whole," etc. An attempt to meet this challenge can easily result in either watering down Hegel's bold and original position or inventing a new jargon that is even more difficult to make sense of than Hegel's. It seems to me that the best strategy for avoiding both of these alternatives is to locate the key points of the Hegelian system in relation to the alternative positions that are more readily accessible for us.

The opening pages of the *Encyclopedia Logic*, which Hegel calls *Preliminary Conception* (*Vorbegriff*), offer a unique opportunity for undertaking such a topology, for in no other published text does Hegel offer such a comprehensive analysis of the major alternatives to his own position. In the *Vorbegriff*, Hegel presents a systematic criticism of traditional metaphysics, empiricism, Kant and Jacobi, allowing us to identify the key points of his own position in terms of the alternatives discussed there. The aim of my strategy is to decipher the key elements of Hegel's positions through the analysis of his perspective on the alternative outlooks. The idea is that by identifying these fundamental points, I can establish a helpful entry point into his

system, rendering the more challenging texts to be analyzed in subsequent chapters more accessible. I shall focus on Hegel's critical analysis of traditional metaphysics, empiricism, and Kant, since these three standpoints are more familiar and readily accessible, hence instrumental in identifying critical points of Hegel's own position, while his discussion of Jacobi would have been relatively less helpful for this purpose.

The first position of thought Hegel examines, pointing out both its "strengths" and "weaknesses," is *rationalist metaphysics*. I'm using the quotation marks here to highlight the fact that the alleged weaknesses and strengths are so evaluated from Hegel's own perspective, rather than from a neutral ground, whatever that might be; and this is why the analysis of this doctrine and Hegel's evaluation thereof could be used as a point of entrance to Hegel's complex ontological theory. Hegel refers to the first position of thought as the traditional metaphysics "the way [it] was constituted among us before the Kantian philosophy" (EL §27), making it clear that he has in mind the tradition that stemmed from Leibniz's metaphysics and dominated the German academia up until Kant. Hence, Leibniz shall serve for me as the primary point of reference when examining Hegel's critical analysis of the first position of thought. While Hegel deploys many different strategies and examples to demonstrate the problematic aspects of the view under consideration, these various approaches can be categorized into three major groups. The first one focuses on the tradition's conception of the nature of determinations of thought used as the medium for grasping reality; the second critical strategy concerns the unjustified projection of a specific structure onto reality; and the third

one takes up an issue with the traditional metaphysic's appropriation of the sensible representation and the specific epistemic function it grants to them.

But before examining each one of these charges closely, I shall briefly outline what Hegel sees as a positive aspect of traditional metaphysics. Hegel opens his analysis of the first position of thought with a somewhat paradoxical claim that in some respects traditional metaphysics was superior to Kantian critical philosophy. "This science regarded the thought-determinations as the *fundamental determinations of things*; and, in virtue of this presupposition ... stood at a higher level than the later critical philosophizing" (EL §28). One should be surprised by this claim, considering that in spite of his occasional critical remarks, Hegel is still of quite a high opinion of Kant's transcendental system. In fact, during his formative years in Jena, Hegel explicitly describes his own philosophical undertaking as a completion of the Kantian project or lifting the spirit of transcendental philosophy from its letter (Difference 79). The paradoxical claim with which Hegel opens his discussion of traditional metaphysics is an evidence of the complex and multifaceted relation between Hegel and Kant, as well as between Hegel and the rationalist tradition. It is due to this complexity that Hegel's project can be seen as Kantian through and through, while at the same time he can be upholding certain commitments of the traditional metaphysics as superior to the Kantian stance (or at least a certain interpretation of Kant).

Hegel locates the advantage of traditional metaphysics in its "*naïve*" but nevertheless correct "conviction" that thought "goes straight to the objects" and



therefore it can gain access to the genuine nature of reality. This confidence of the tradition is contrasted with certain reading of Kant (the one Hegel often draws on when highlighting the differences between Kant's and his own positions), according to which we are "the citizens of two worlds," of *noumena* and of *phenomena*. The latter encompasses the things as they appear to us as variously determined by our sensibility and understanding, while the former is the realm of *things in themselves* as independent from our cognitive constitution. Hegel's point is that the two-world picture ultimately commits us to skepticism, or, to be more specific, to the skepticism of the *modern* kind that emerged from Descartes and attained its full fruition with Hume (Hegel was of a much higher opinion of the ancient form of skepticism), while traditional metaphysics maintains the thesis of the accessibility of the true nature of reality by thought. In the passage just quoted, I omitted the clause in which Hegel describes the nature of the "presupposition" that renders the tradition superior to critical philosophy "in virtue of this presupposition, that the cognition of things as they are *in-themselves* results from the *thinking* of what *is*, it stood at a higher level than the later critical philosophizing" (EL §28). The reference to the specific weakness of the critical philosophy is obvious—the Kantian postulation of inaccessibility of the thing-in-itself; so is the corresponding strength of traditional metaphysics—the identity of the determinations of thought and determinations of things. What we can take home from this point is that Hegel's own ontology cannot maintain any gap between the determinations of things and determinations of thought; he has to present a conception of *being* that is not foreign to *thought* and a conception of *thought* that is not external to *being*.

At the same time, we should keep in mind that Hegel's endorsement of the epistemic optimism of traditional metaphysics is not unqualified. He sees it stemming not from the strength of the tradition but from its weakness, not from having successfully dealt with the challenges of epistemological and ontological nature that critical philosophy has succumbed to, but from a blunder—the failure to see them. Dogmatic metaphysics, according to Hegel, was “still unconscious of the antithesis of thinking within and against itself” (EL 26) and this is what affords it the courage to take the content of thought to be identical to the determinations of the world. Clearly, the antithesis that Hegel is talking about here goes along the lines of the question that Kant stumbled upon as he reported in the well-known letter to his former student Herz and from which the entire project of the critical philosophy arose: “What is the ground of the relation of that in us which we call ‘representation’ to the object?” Therefore, for Hegel what the tradition was “still unconscious of” was the problematicity of the assumption of the identity of thought and being, the need for the justification of applicability of the concepts to the world. Consequently the tradition was unaware of the whole cascade of the ontological and epistemological problems that emerge from this. In Kant's hands philosophy had lost this naïveté, but as Hegel sees it, Kant himself was not able to realize the potential that “the antithesis of thinking” opened up for him and was ultimately driven by it to skepticism.

# 1) Critique of Traditional Metaphysics

## 1.1) Abstract Universals as Inadequate Medium of Cognition

The first critical strategy Hegel advances against traditional metaphysics concerns the nature of abstract universals and their function as the medium by means of which a true account of reality is supposed to be attained. Hegel argues that “these determinations, in their abstraction, were taken to be valid on their own account” and by doing this the tradition was misinterpreting their nature. The *universal determinations* that he is concerned with here can be seen as *abstract* in two distinct senses. First, they are taken to be independent of the object they are predicated of; they are abstracted from the individual the properties of which they allegedly represent. The idea is that a universal determination picks out a specific property (or a set of properties) that a given individual has, together with an indefinite number of other individuals; but at the same time they are taken to be independent of the individuals, just as the individuals are taken to be independent of the universal representing their properties. The universal determinations are assumed to exist in the realm of *representations*, while the individuals exist in the realm of the *represented* entities; they belong to two different ontological domains. The *existence* of a given abstract universal that represents a property of an individual entity clearly cannot depend on the *existence* of the individual being represented as the abstract universal represents properties of indefinite number of

other individuals. The universal concepts of *green* or *round*, for example, can represent the properties of an individual entity, but they would not be affected either in the ontological or the semantic sense if the individual didn't exist.

Hegel's criticism is directed at what he sees as a mistaken conception of the relation between objects and the determinations of their properties regarded as *external* to one another. Traditional metaphysics, according to Hegel, was engaged in the "external reflection about the object, since the determinations (the predicates) are found ready-made in my representation, and are attached to object in a merely external way" (EL §28, 28.5). This bifurcated model, the dualistic ontology that conceived of reality as comprised of two domains (represented vs. representations), has interesting epistemological and semantic implications. "In the proposition 'God is eternal, etc.,' we begin with the representation 'God;' but what he is, is not yet *known*; only the predicate states expressly what he is" (EL §31, 69.2). First, due to the bifurcated ontological backdrop and the naïve confidence about the accessibility of the things by thought, traditional metaphysics substitutes the objects with their representations; "this metaphysics took them [objects] from representations" (EL §31, 68). But the representation that is taken for the object is conceived as completely indeterminate and the determination is supposed to be carried out through the attribution of the abstract universals to it. The object of cognition is therefore taken as completely deprived of conceptual content, but it is nevertheless to be individuated as either *the soul*, or *God*, or, *the world*, etc. Hegel's point here is that the alleged identification of an object without ascribing to it any conceptual content is a mere illusion: "The representation of the soul, of the world,

of God, seems at first to provide thinking with a firm hold" (EL §31, 68), but it merely *seems* to do so. How are we to know that it is the World and not God, for example, that we are attempting to represent by means of abstract determinations if there is no cognitive content already immanently present in it? Hence, the bifurcated ontological model with its abstract universals and the illusory grasp of the true nature of objects is fundamentally flawed, according to Hegel. Therefore, in Hegel's transcendental ontology we are to expect a radically different take on the relation between the objects and the determinations of thought. Hegel in fact gives us some indication of the direction he wants to take his project: "Genuine cognition of an object, on the other hand, has to be such that the object determines itself from within itself, and does not acquire its predicates in the external way" (EL §28, 67.5). Presentation of the full-fledged account of this self-determining object is the overall task of my dissertation and it should gradually emerge throughout the following three chapters, but already at this point we can see how it will radically differ from the standard approach used by traditional metaphysics.

The second sense in which we can read the thesis that the determinations of thought are considered "valid on their own account" is not concerned with their relation to the object of cognition but to one another and the origins of their content. The target of Hegel's criticism here is the semantic atomism of traditional metaphysics. According to him, the universal determinations by means of which the representation of actuality is to be accomplished were taken by the tradition to be semantically independent of one another as well as from the cognitive effort of the mind. Old metaphysics, claims Hegel,

did not go beyond the thinking of mere *understanding*. It took up the abstract determinations of thought immediately, and let them count in their immediacy as predicates of what is true. When we are discussing thinking we must distinguish between *finite* thinking, the thinking of the mere *understanding*, from the *infinite* thinking of *reason*. Taken in isolation, just as they are immediately given, the thought-determinations are finite determinations. But what is true is what is infinite. (EL §28, 66.4)

Hegel further spells out what he means by the abstract determinations taken by the tradition as *immediately given*: “that metaphysics moved in thought determinations whose restrictions counted for it as something fixed” (EL §28, 67.3). It is clear that Hegel is critical of the rigidity of the conceptual content the tradition used to comprehend the world. It took the conceptual content of the abstract determinations as a given, presented to the consciousness in its inner space of representations as a set of fixed determinations of thought that correspond to the determination of a thing in the outer realm, that of represented entities. The basic elements of the representation are thus conceived of as kinds of atoms that the mind needs to arrange in a correct way to represent the world, but neither their meaning nor their interrelation with one another is alterable by the mind. As such, we are essentially dealing here with a variation of the myth of the given, wherein what is given is the specific conceptual content as a set of immutable elements that needs to be organized in the right way as a mosaic that maps onto the immanent structure of the world, which also is postulated as given.

Hegel’s alternative to what he sees as a mistaken conception of conceptual content as “fixed” and “immediately given” is hinted at in the following passage:

“Thinking is only finite insofar as it stays within restricted determinations, which it holds to be ultimate. Infinite or speculative thinking, on the contrary, makes determinations likewise, but, in determining, in limiting, it sublates this defect again” (EL §28, 67.2). Hegel wants to substitute the fixed, restricted determinations with an account of a process that generates such determinations, but at the same time sublates them. The rigidity is to be replaced with plasticity and the givenness with the production of determinations. Moreover, the way the relation between these determinations was conceived will also have to undergo fundamental revision. Semantic atomism will have to be left behind for a more closely tied systematic relations, and the law of non-contradiction—as the following statement makes clear—will assume quite a different function in Hegel’s hand from the one it had in the traditional approach.

...dogmatism consists in adhering to one-sided determinations of the understanding whilst excluding their opposites. This is just the strict ‘either-or,’ according to which (for instance) the world is either finite or infinite, but not both. On the contrary, what is genuine and speculative is precisely what does not have any such one-sided determination in it, and is therefore not exhausted by it ... what is one sided is not fixed and does not subsist on its own account; instead it is contained within the whole as sublated. (EL §32, 70)

As the passage clearly shows, Hegel is not claiming—as is often mistakenly thought—that the law of non-contradiction is false and ought to be rejected; instead, he states that the law “is contained within the whole.” Thus, we should expect that it will have an important function in “the whole,” by which Hegel clearly means the systematically related determinations. Moreover, the law of non-contradiction will

be contained in a sublated form, claims Hegel. It is important to notice here that the same term was used in reference to the abstract universals in the above-cited passage. To sublate for Hegel does not mean to reject; rather, it is to go beyond and retain it by locating its place in a more fundamental account. Just like with the abstract universals that are still part of the Hegelian system (as the above-cited passage claims, “the speculative thinking ... makes determinations likewise”) while its misconstrued aspects are left behind, we should expect that in like manner the law of non-contradiction will be presented in Hegelian transcendental ontology in a different light with a different function. I shall return to this theme later in this chapter when discussing Hegel’s critical analysis of Kant’s philosophy and take a closer look at that time at Hegel’s take on contradiction and its role in his overall system.

Brady Bowman presents a similar reading of the Hegelian distinction between the finite vs. infinite thought determinations. Of finite determinations, Bowman writes:

finitude and untruth was said to consist in the fact that, although they display the form of independently determinate identity and hence an absolute character, in fact they have their determinate content only via their relation-to-other, into which other they therefore pass over and pass away. So finitude is here glossed as relation-to-other, while infinitude and eternity are to be understood as relation-to-self. (Bowman 39)



Hence, the content of the finite determinations of thought, instead of being fixed and given to the mind as independently determined, is conditioned by the relation to others. These determinations have meaning only as a part of a systematically interrelated constellation of concepts, which according to Bowman has self-relational structure and is understood by Hegel as infinite thought. I agree here with Bowman, and he is also right in associating the self-relational structure of interrelated systems of concepts with the Hegelian notion of the Concept: "Thus it would seem that what distinguishes the Concepts from the merely finite thought-determinations is its instantiation of pure relation-to-self or, as Hegel also calls it, the relation of infinity" (Bowman 39). Indeed, as my analysis in Chapters 4 and 5 shall show, the self-relational structure is an essential feature of the Hegelian notion of the Concepts, which rejects traditional metaphysics's rigid and atomistic conception of abstract determinations of thought and replaces it with a dynamic theory of empirical concepts as systematically related constellation of determinations marked with perpetual plasticity.

## **1.2) Projection of the Substance-Property Formal Structure**

The second critical strategy Hegel deploys concerns the projection of a certain formal structure onto reality. The claim is that dogmatic metaphysics "presupposes that cognition of the Absolute could come about through attaching of predicates to it." Although here he uses his technical term *absolute* for the reasons that shall become apparent later, I shall treat this term as identical to *actuality*. In

another passage Hegel is even more explicit about traditional metaphysic's unjustified imposition of the formal structure borrowed from language onto actuality: "the form of the proposition, or more precisely that of the judgment, is incapable of expressing what is concrete (and what is true is concrete) and speculative; because of its form. The judgment is one-sided and to that extent false" (EL §31, 69.2). Hegel sees not only the nature of determinations of thought and their interrelation with one another and the relation to the object as fundamentally mistaken, but he also believes the formal structure of the judgment is inadvertently projected as the basic fabric of the world. Here we are dealing with another aspect of the naïveté of traditional metaphysic, which unwittingly presupposes the substance-property ontological structure of reality. By taking for granted that reality can be cognized through deployment of judgments wherein predicates are attributed to subjects, the tradition is assuming the amenability of the world to the subject—predicate structure of judgment. In other words, dogmatic metaphysics presupposes that reality is made up of substances and the properties that inhere in them, wherein the logical subject of judgments denotes the substance while the predicate refers to the property inhering in it.

Hegel's criticism of the projection of the subject-predicate structure onto reality offers an interesting perspective on Stern's reading of Hegel's notion of object. He reads Hegel as providing an alternative to the model of object as a bundle of property-universals.

It is Hegel's aim in the *Logic* to show that this reductionist ontology rests on the mistaken assumption

that all individuals can be analysed into a plurality-universals. His analysis of the notion, judgment, and syllogism is designed to establish that in fact *substance* universal forms the essential nature of the individual as a *whole*, and that this universal cannot be reduced to a collection of universals of another type. (Stern 1990, 74)

Stern is indeed correct: Hegel rejects the bundle theory of the object as a part of his overall criticism of the projection of the form of the judgment onto the world. The basic ontological fabric of actuality conceived as made up of the individuals as the indeterminate substances that serve as the placeholders in which the property-universals inhere is clearly one way in which the judgment's formal structure can be seen as projected onto and ossified in the world.

But it is not clear that the alternative model Stern ascribes to Hegel does not fall under the same criticism. The substance universal that forms the essential nature of the individual indeed appears to be a prime candidate for the Hegelian criticism. For the presence of this central element in the Hegelian conception of an object as Stern sees it implies a projection of the subject-predicate structure onto the world, and not only on one (as was the case with the bundle theory) but on two different levels. First, is a predicating those universals to substance-universal that are not included in it, for instance, using Stern's example, "this rose is red" or "this man is Greek," etc. This can be described as a surface level projection of the formal structure of judgment onto reality. But there is a more fundamental level on which the very same structure is being imposed. Examples of these would be "roses are flowers" or "men are mammals." In this case, the judgment form projection is taking place on a more basic level, within the substance-universal that, according to Stern,

“forms the essential nature of the individual as a whole” (Stern 1990, 74). Hence, were the perspective advanced by Stern expressing Hegel’s ontological outlook, the criticism of projecting the structure of judgment onto actuality would apply not only to traditional metaphysics but also to his own theory. As such, what Stern presents cannot be the Hegelian vision of actuality on the most fundamental level.

Hegel’s criticism of traditional metaphysics for presupposing that the formal relations between the terms of judgment also obtain within the immanent structure of the mind-independent reality is both to the point but nevertheless still quite puzzling. On the one hand, Hegel is clearly right—not only the immediate target of his criticism but pretty much the entire tradition of Western philosophy can be accused of simply presupposing the substance-property ontological model. But at the same time, it is hard to see where Hegel is heading with this criticism, or what other structure, if any, could reality have if not the one that he accuses the tradition of having assumed. The Hegelian alternative to the traditional ontological model shall become clear in Chapters 4 and 5, where I examine his theory of the Concept. However, we can already see at this point that neither the atomistic semantic theory of abstract universals nor the structure that mimics the subject-predicate form of the assertoric judgment has a place on the ground floor of Hegel’s transcendental ontology. At the same time, this does not mean that Stern’s reading is completely misguided. In fact, as we shall see, the substance-universals will play an important function in the individuation of entities, although they are not the most basic building blocks of reality as Hegel’s transcendental ontology conceives it.

Having looked at the two critical points Hegel makes in the opening pages of the *Encyclopedia Logic*, we can already start seeing the contours of a fundamental shift for which Hegel is preparing his readers. Robert Brandom describes this transformation as a historic turn regarding “the origin and the justification of our ideas” that replaces the *representation* with *inference* as its “master concept” (Brandom 2000, 46). The relative explanatory priority accorded to the concepts of representation in Descartes is gradually replaced by inference, and division of the world into “what is by nature a representing and what by nature can only be represented” is left behind. Our analysis of Hegel’s criticism of traditional metaphysics confirms Brandom’s thesis; in the *Vorbegriff* Hegel is clearly preparing ground for the rejection of the bifurcated ontological model and placing the systematic relatedness between the empirical concepts at the epicenter of his project. But Brandom, by focusing almost exclusively on the semantic aspects of the Hegelian turn, does not do full justice to its ontological dimension. Hegel’s praising of traditional metaphysics’ confidence in the unity of thought and being indicates that the stance he is setting up to present will not be confined to the semantic issue about the origins and justification of ideas or the role of inferential relation in the generation of conceptual content. Instead, his project is primarily ontological. Hegel will not only be concerned with the questions of the source and genesis of the concepts through which the world manifest itself to us; instead he is primarily concerned with the question of the relation between the nature of thought and its determinations on the one hand and the world on the other. If these are not to be conceived as standing in the representing vs. represented relation to one another,

then how are we to think of their relation? This is one of the central questions for which we should expect Hegel's answer in the pivotal parts of his *Logic*, which will be discussed in the subsequent chapters of this dissertation.

### **1.3) Sensible Representations**

The third central critical theme Hegel develops in the part of *Vorbeginn* dedicated to traditional metaphysics is that of misunderstanding the epistemic function of sensible representations. Hegel claims that traditional metaphysics tries to "reproduce the content of sense-experience and intuition" and upholds this "as the truth" (EL §26, 65). On its face, this criticism seems completely groundless, since taking the sense experience as the source of knowledge is traditionally associated not with the rationalist metaphysics that Hegel is targeting here but with the empiricists who will be dealt with by Hegel in the following section. A close examination of the view under consideration, however, reveals that Hegel's criticism is indeed well justified.

According to Leibniz, the prime representative of the tradition Hegel is considering here, *empirical concepts*, are generated through experience; they are formed via the operation of the intellect on the sense perception that experience offers (Die philosophischen Schriften, IV 425). Sense perceptions themselves are confused perceptions originating from the aggregates of monads. For Leibniz, every single monad perceives every other one, but the clarity and distinctness of this perception is a function of the perfection of the perceiving monad as well as the disposition between the perceiving and the perceived monads. God, for example,

perceives the totality of the world perfectly clearly; on the other hand, the monads of the most rudimentary sort (Leibniz calls them bare monads, which are associated with the inanimate objects although they are not reducible to them) have extremely obscure perceptions. Humans are somewhere in between; besides the ability to perceive they are also endowed with the faculty of *apperception*—that is, the reflective awareness of their inner states, including perceptual states. In other words, if a perception is a state of relation with other monads, apperception is that of self-relation of the monad; it is the perception through which the mind (which is the human monad according to Leibniz) turns an introspective gaze toward its own inner states: the perceptual states of other monads.

Now, sense perceptions on which our cognition of physical objects rests involve both perception of other monads and apperception of our own inner states. Physical objects, according to Leibniz, are associated not with individual substances but aggregates of monads, that is, a group of monads that form an organized unity. Human mind perceives each one of the infinite number of individual monads, but these perceptions are not conscious; the mind is merely perceiving them without taking note of the perceiving, its introspection is not directed at these perceptual states. Leibniz refers to these as *small perceptions*; they do not merely happen to be unnoticed but in principle cannot become conscious. What we are conscious instead of these perceptions taken individually, is the plurality of them run through and held together, and these are sensations. Moreover, since sensations are confused perceptions, they will not allow discrimination of the individual components of which it is made. In other words, there exists not even a theoretical possibility that

we can “climb” from the confused perceptions to the clear and distinct ones that express the true nature of reality.

Hence we can see where Hegel is coming from in criticizing rationalist metaphysics for a hopeless attempt (according to its own criterion) to ground cognition on the reproduction of the content of sensible representations. According to Leibniz, sensible representations are intrinsically defective media for gaining access to the ultimate structure of reality. Hence, Hegel’s point is that while traditional metaphysics starts with a correct insight about the accessibility of the true nature of the worlds by thought, i.e., the identity of the completely individuated concepts and the monads, when it comes to its theory of human cognition and generation of empirical concepts, traditional metaphysics essentially undermines its own fundamental assumption. The reason for this failure, according to Hegel, is that traditional metaphysics attempts to derive the content of its empirical concepts from sensible intuitions. The initial confidence in the power of thought and accessibility of truth through its determinations is undermined by positioning “sense-experience and intuitions” as the origin of the content of the empirical concepts. Instead of *thought* being granted the function of the active power that generates determination of its own, it is taken as a passive faculty that receives content from sensations. Traditional metaphysics mistakenly takes the objects of its cognition from “representation, laid them down as ready-made, given subjects for the application of the determinations of the understanding to them, and possessed in this representation alone the criterion of whether the predicates were adequate and sufficient or not” (EL §30).



Wilfrid Sellars agrees with Hegel's criticism here by describing such a conception of the sense impressions as the prime example of the myth of the given. He sees it as a confused notion that mangles together two distinctly different phenomena with different epistemological and ontological purports.

Sellars diagnoses 'the classical concept of sense datum' as a 'mongrel resulting from a crossbreeding of two ideas': first, an idea of non-concept-involving sensory episodes, such as sensations of red; and, second, an idea of non-inferential knowings that such-and-such is the case. This is a mongrel, a conflation, because attributions of non-concept-involving episodes belong below the line drawn by Sellars's master thought, whereas attribution of knowing belong above it. (McDowell 2009, 9)

The *line* mentioned here is supposed to separate the episodes of our experience that need to be understood in terms of actualization of our conceptual capacities (above the line) from those that do not need to (below the line). What Sellars is pursuing here is a Hegelian thread of arguing the impossibility of reduction of the conceptual content to sensations. The "classical conception of sense" datum according to him is a fantastic transplantation of the element immanent to one ontological domain into its opposite one. Instead of solving the question of the origins of conceptual content, it is merely creating an illusion of such a solution.

Having looked at Hegel's critical analysis of traditional metaphysics and considered the aspects of it that he endorses, as well as the ones that he rejects, the following conclusions can be drawn about the position he is setting the stage for.

- 1) The dualistic ontology and the correspondence theory of cognition that is tied to it cannot be a part of Hegel's system. He has to present an account of actuality and the nature of cognition that offer an alternative model of relation between thought and being. Determinations of thought and individual objects that they represent in the traditional model will have to be reconceived in such a way that the gap between them is no longer part of the account.
- 2) Semantic atomism has to be replaced with an account in which the conceptual content of the determinations of thought is much more closely tied with one another and constitute a systematically related whole.
- 3) The traditional substance–attribute model that Hegel criticizes as a projection of the form of judgment onto actuality has to be replaced with an alternative that cannot be faulted in imposing the structure of language onto reality.
- 4) Sensible intuitions cannot be the source of the conceptual content through which the mind is related to the world. In other words, we should expect that in Hegel's transcendental ontology, sense perception will not play the central role in the generation of the determinations of thought.

## 2) Critique of Empiricism

Hegel's examination of the second position of thought consists of two parts: The first one concerns empiricism, and the second Kant's critical philosophy. At first it may be surprising to find Kant, with whom Hegel shares much in common, included within the same position of thought as thinkers like Locke and Hume, who could hardly be more distant from him. But as our analysis will make clear, this move by Hegel is motivated by stressing the difference between his and Kantian stances.

### 2.1) The Mind vs. the World

The critical strategies Hegel develops against empiricism are quite helpful in furthering our understanding of his position. The fundamental flaw of empiricism in Hegel's eye is that according to it, "the external is the true" while our cognition is "supposed to cling exclusively to what belongs to perception." (EL §38, 81.2). All central figures within the classical empiricist tradition maintain that the mind has immediate access only to its inner content. Locke, for example, describes *ideas* as the objects internal to the mind to be distinguished from the mind external objects the qualities of which they are to correspond to: "Whatsoever the mind perceives in itself, or is the immediate object of perception, thought, or understanding, that I call idea"(Locke VIII §8, 75). When Locke describes *idea* as "the *immediate* object of perception," he is setting it apart from the mediated relation that the mind stands to the objects as they are in the actual world. Immediate objects or ideas are

immediate because the mind “perceives [them] in itself;” the mind-external objects, on the other hand, are postulated to belong in the world external to the mind, which we never perceive directly. According to Hegel, this abyss between what is available to the mind on the one hand and the world on the other inevitably leads to skepticism, whether acknowledged (as in Hume) or not (as in Locke). Locke attempted to privilege certain simple ideas (extension, shape, number, etc., corresponding to the primary qualities) over others (color, taste, paint, etc., corresponding to the secondary qualities) as corresponding to the features of the actual, mind-independent reality. But very few have been convinced by Locke. The kinds of arguments he offers against the ideas of secondary qualities can clearly be applied to the ideas of primary qualities as well. Hegel elaborates on the theme he has already developed in his discussion of traditional metaphysics. However, if there the central theme is the abstract nature of relation between the determinations of thought and the objects, here the alleged correspondence between the featured on the inner vs. the outer realm is brought to the fore. Obviously, both of these are different strategies he employs in rejecting the traditional dualistic ontology that is shared by both rationalist and the empiricist hairs of Descartes. Therefore, we can expect Hegel to articulate a relation between the mind and the world in which they no longer stand in opposition to one another, and the bifurcated ontology of the realm of ideas vs. real of mind-external entities together with its correspondence theory of truth is left behind.

At the same time, we should not assume that, having rejected the correspondence theory of truth and criticized the *externality* of truth, Hegel is

upholding the *identity* theory of truth. The identity theory of truth, upheld by a wide spectrum of influential thinkers like Bradley, Frege, and Russell, has emerged as an alternative to the correspondence theory, and if according to the correspondence theory the truth-bearers like propositions and judgments are made true by their correspondence to facts, according to the identity theory they are identical to facts. Thomas Baldwin has recently suggested that Hegel's claims, such as "The truth in the deeper sense ... consists in the identity between objectivity and the notion" (Baldwin 1991, 40), are evidence that he is putting forward a version of the identity theory of truth. But the problem with this thesis is that it is still based on the dualistic ontological model and cannot even be articulated without having it as its backdrop. The identity theory of truth that attempts to secure an intimate connection between the mind and the world presupposes in the first place an ontological gap between them; the connection is sought on the backdrop of difference. On the other hand, as the subsequent chapters will make clear, Hegel rejects dualistic ontology altogether, offering a much more radical rejection of the correspondence theory than the identity theory of truth does. I agree with Robert Stern when he points out that the passage based on which Baldwin is advancing his thesis is concerned not with *propositional* but with *material* truth.

Truth is propositional when it is attributed to statements, judgments, or propositions on the basis of their accordance with the way things are. Truth is material when it is attributed to something on the basis of the accordance of the thing with its essence... Hegel's interest is in material truth: in how far an object can be said to be true, in the sense of conforming to its

“concept” (Begriff), where by this he means its nature or essence. (Stern 2009, 77-78)

Indeed, the subsequent chapters of this work are dedicated to the articulation of the immanent structure of the Hegelian notion of the Concept and the accordance of actuality to this structure is the criterion of the material conception of truth that Stern is putting forth here.

## **2.2) Universals as Abstraction from Sense Perception**

Another critical point Hegel raises against empiricism is its misunderstanding of the nature of relation between sense perceptions and the universals. For Locke and his followers, empirical concepts, or the *universal ideas*, are the products of the process of abstraction from sensible perceptions or the *particular ideas*. The conceptual content hence is extracted from the sensible representations, which in turn are thought of as effects that external objects bring about in the mind. But as Hegel points out, this renders the epistemic purport of the universal determinations spurious.

Empiricism raises the content belonging to perception, feeling, and intuition to the form of universal representations, sentences, and laws, etc. This happens, however, only in the sense that these universal determinations (e.g. force) are to possess no other meaning and validity for themselves than that taken from perception, and that no connection is supposed to be legitimate unless it has been exhibited in the appearances. (EL §38, 77.1)

Hegel's point is that such a conception of universality fundamentally undermines its viability for attaining knowledge, for what is supposed to represent the "outer," mind-independent reality is conceived as derived from the content of the "inner" subjective states. It is interesting to note here that, when explaining the reasons that the claim of sense perceptions being the source of universal determinations diminishes their "meaning and validity," Hegel is clearly striking Kantian notes: "insofar as perception is to remain the foundation of what is to count as the truth, universality and necessity appear to be something unwarranted, a subjective coincidence, a mere habit, and its content might just as well be as it is or otherwise" (EL §39, 80.1). Obviously, the argument against the "unwarrantedness" of universality is borrowed from the well-known passage from the Preface of the *CPR*, in which Kant claims that "Experience teaches us, to be sure, that something is constituted thus and so, but not that it could not be otherwise... Thus is a judgment is thought in strict universality, i.e., in such a way that no exception is at all is allowed to be possible, then it is not derived from experience, but is rather valid absolutely a priori" (B3-4). So Hegel uses the argument of the "empiricist" Kant (this is, the implication of placing Kant within the same position of thought as empiricism) against the major tenets of the empiricist tradition. This is clear evidence that Hegel is fully aware of the fundamental differences between Kant and empiricist positions. Moreover, as we shall see later, Hegel inherits a great deal of the Kantian approach when it comes to the question of the origins of the universal determinations.

However, whatever the relation between the Hegelian and Kantian stances on the origin of universals, one thing is clear: Hegel is further developing the theme already mentioned in his critical analysis of traditional metaphysics—the conceptual content of the universal determinations cannot be postulated as given in the sense perceptions. Hence, if the central attack against the Leibnizians’ conception of the universals was its misconstrual of the relation between the universals as well as the relation between universals and the object of cognition, the key flaw of the empiricist tradition’s notion of universality is its epistemic inadequacy due to the reduction of its content to the subjective states of sense perceptions. As such, from Hegel’s own theory we should expect an alternative account of the origins of the universal determination and their content.

My understanding of Hegel’s take on the relation between the sense perceptions and the universals is quite close to the position Sellars puts forth in *Science and Metaphysics*. McDowell sees this position as ascribing to sense perceptions a transcendental function. “Sellars’s ‘sense impression inference’ is a piece of transcendental philosophy, in the following sense: it is directed towards showing our entitlement to conceive subjective occurrences as possessing objective purport” (McDowell 2009, 17). Sense perceptions play the function of the conditions of the possibility of the objective purport of conceptual occurrences. Instead of containing the claims about the world, they are the accompanying conditions that render the world accessible to us thought them.

visual sensations or sense impressions are not simply  
an extra part of the truth about visual experiences, over



and above the part that deals with the distinctive way in which visual experiences 'contain' claims ... it is not that visual experiences "contain" claims in their distinct way, and then there is a simply additional fact about them, that they involve visual sensations. The reason we have to acknowledge the 'additional' fact, in Sallars's view, is that only so can we be entitled to have spoken as we did when we gave our above-the-line characterization to visual experiences. (McDowell 2009, 17)

Hence, the claim is that sensations, rather than containing the conceptual content or merely accompanying it in experience, are the transcendental condition of objective purport of the content.

### **2.3) Mere Analysis**

Another important critical point Hegel raises against the empiricists concerns the method used for generating universal determinations. He describes this as a process of analysis that dissects and separates the content of the objects of representation into the marks that have to be abstracted from them in order to generate empirical concepts and the ones that don't belong to these determinations. Hegel describes this method as killing of an "alive being," as it moves away from the "concrete" towards abstract: "Because empiricism analyses objects, it is in error if it believes that it leaves them as they are, since it in fact transforms the concrete into something abstract. By this process, it happens at the same time that life is taken from the living, for only the concrete, or one, is alive" (EL §38, 78).

Of note here is that Hegel is not simply rejecting analysis as a moment in the generation of empirical concepts; what he is attacking is the misconceiving of

analysis as the only method used in this process. His point is that it is not merely or even primarily analysis, but first and foremost the synthesis, that plays the key role in furnishing the determinations through which the mind is mediated to the world: “Nonetheless, this severing [Scheidung] must occur in order to comprehend, and spirit is itself the severing in itself. This, however, is only one side, and the chief Point consists in the unification of what has been severed” (EL §38, 78.3). Hence, for Hegel, the synthesis, i.e., the unification of distinct determinations, plays at least as much importance as the analysis of their dissection into component parts.

According to Hegel, the central tenet of empiricism that conceptual content of universal determinations is traceable back to sense perceptions is contradicted by empiricists themselves:

The fundamental delusion in scientific empiricism is always that it uses the metaphysical categories of matter, force (not to mention those of the one, the many, universality, and infinity, etc.), and proceeds to make inferences guided by such categories, all the while presupposing and applying the forms of syllogistic inference, ignorant that in so doing it itself contains and pursues metaphysics and that it uses those categories and their relationships in a completely uncritical and unconscious fashion. (EL §38, 77-78)

Indeed, Locke introduces a category of simple ideas, like *unity*, *existence*, *power*, *succession*, etc., that originates neither in the senses nor in reflection; instead, these ideas are “suggested,” as Locke claims, by the ideas of both sensations and reflection. Hegel’s point is that clearly Locke is helping himself to the basic determinations of thought that could not have been traced back to sense perceptions, and so he comes up with an obscure explanation of their origins in

order to avoid directly contradicting the main thesis of empiricism. Therefore, the empiricist, for Hegel, gets completely wrong the issue of the origin of the conceptual content, and we can expect a radically different approach from his own alternative.

## **2.4) Unfreedom**

Perhaps the most fundamental reason for the unacceptability of the empiricist doctrine for Hegel lies in its being the “doctrine of unfreedom.” By conceiving of the world with its determinate features as already individuated and given to us through sense perceptions, the empiricist tradition is postulating what Hegel sees as its key thesis “the external is the true” and confines the intellect to the passive role of a mere recipient that takes in the world with its already-formed determinate features.

Now, insofar as this sensory component is and remains a given for empiricism, it is a doctrine of unfreedom, for freedom consists precisely in my having no absolutely other over against me, but depending instead only on a content that I am myself. (EL §38, 79.5)

The “sensory component” as we know is the source of all cognition, according to empiricists; as such, the world with its determinate features is completely given to us according to the empiricist view. This for Hegel means that actuality as conceived by empiricists is confronting us as “absolutely other.”

Here we can clearly see the Kantian influence on Hegel’s position. Freedom as self-determination or related to the content that “I am myself” is contrasted with

the mere reception wherein we passively take in the content given to us from some external source. Kant postulated that we are citizens of two worlds, one sensible and the other rational. The former is the realm of determinism and the latter of freedom. The freedom is afforded to us via the spontaneity of our rational faculty that posits content of its own. Hence, for Hegel, just like for Kant, “unfreedom” is associated with the passive “taking in” of the determinate content that is not a product of one’s own, while the logical space of freedom is that of reason’s production of the determinate content of its own. I thus agree with McDowell’s take on the Kantian-Sellarsian position that “judging, making up our minds what to think, is something for which we are in principle responsible—something we freely do, as opposed to something that merely happens in our lives... this freedom, exemplified in responsible acts of judging, is essentially a matter of being answerable to criticism in the light of rationally relevant considerations. So the realm of freedom, at least the realms of freedom of judging, can be identified with the space of reason” (McDowell 2009, 6). As Hegel’s criticism of the “unfreed” of the empiricist doctrine indicates, Hegel will be developing an account of epigenesis of “the space of reason” within which the relation to “absolute other” is substituted with the relation to self.

To summarize my discussion of Hegel’s critical analysis of empiricism, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- 1) As a further elaboration of the insights reached through his analysis of traditional metaphysics and its dualistic ontology, Hegel rejects the empiricist idea of truth as correspondence between reality and

representations. Hence, we should expect from Hegel an epistemological account that is alternative to both the correspondence and identity theories of truth.

- 2) The strong Kantian influence can be traced in Hegel's attack on the empiricist postulation of sense perception as the source of universal determinations, as well as its exclusive emphasis of *analysis* and abstraction in generation of universals. Hence, the Kantian positing of synthetic judgments as the basic condition of the possibility of any cognition should be expected to see further development in Hegel's doctrine.
- 3) The empiricist ontological and epistemological stances exemplify for Hegel denial of freedom, which he clearly associates with the relation to the world in which it is passively taken in by the subject. The alternative account that is hinted at in his comments would elaborate as the medium of relation with the world the system of determinations that comprise the logical space of reason.

### 3) Critique of Kant

After his critical analysis of empiricism, Hegel turns to a lengthier examination of Kant, whom he also includes in the second position of thought. The close proximity of his own system with the position examined makes studying this part of the *Vorbegriff* particularly fruitful, as each critical point Hegel raises will be an indicator of the pivotal points of difference between the two outlooks with a largely shared background. I shall focus on three central themes Hegel develops throughout his critical examination of the Kantian philosophy. The first one concerns Kant's conception of *universality*. Hegel's take on the Kantian notion of universality, as the following analysis shall show, is geared not to its outright rejection but to its critical appropriation. He supports the main thrusts of the Kantian approach, while at the same time criticizing him for not fully developing its potential. Another prominent critical point Hegel deploys against Kant is that his system is fractured into subjective vs. objective moments. Hegel criticizes Kant's notion of *the thing in itself*, which he sees as undermining the epistemic purport of the determinations of thought, turning his critical philosophy into a mere subjective idealism. The claim is that by introducing *the thing in itself* in his system, Kant fails to overcome the gap between the determinations of thought on the one hand and the true nature of reality on the other. The last line of criticism that I will discuss here is that of the role of contradiction in the determination of objective reality. As we shall see, Hegel is critical of Kant's use of contradiction that grants it only

negative function. The Hegelian alternative that will be indicated in his critical remarks and will be more fully fleshed out in the Doctrine of Essence will grant to contradiction a much more important a role in the determination of objective reality.

### **3.1) Immanence of universals**

Hegel opens his critical analysis of Kant by pointing out the similarity between Kant's and the empiricist positions—clearly an attempt to justify placing Kant within the same position of thought as empiricism. "Critical Philosophy has in common with Empiricism that it accepts experience as the *only* basis for our cognitions" (EL §40, 80.3). These words undeniably echo the well-known thesis from the opening lines of his B-edition Introduction: "There is no doubt whatever that all our cognition begins with experience; for how else should the cognitive faculty be awakened into exercise if not through objects that stimulate our senses...." (B1). And just as Kant soon qualifies this empiricist-sounding claim, "But although all our cognition commences with experience, yet it does not on that account all arise from experience" (B1), so does Hegel; and in addition to this he explicitly states the element that "does not arise" from experience: "universality and necessity ... are found to be present in ... experience" and this aspect of experience "belongs to the spontaneity of thinking, or is a priori" (EL §40, 81.1).

Hegel here points to the key move Kant makes that sets him apart from the empiricists—the *internalization* of the universals to the empirical reality. Recall that,

for Locke, universals don't belong to the actual fabric of the mind-external world; rather, they are products of abstraction and reside only within the inner realm of representations. Contrary to this, Kant not only acknowledges that universals belong to the experienced reality, but asserts that they "make up *the objectivity* of the cognitions of experience" (EL §40 81.1). Hegel is clearly impressed with the step Kant takes toward conceptual realism, but at the same time he also criticizes Kant for not going far enough and not fleshing out the full potential in this move. "To be cognizant, however, means nothing else but the knowing of object according to its determinate content. A determinate content, however, contains a manifold *connection* within itself and is the basis for connections with many other objects" (EL §46 89.2). According to Hegel, the "Kantian reason has nothing but the categories" (EL §46 89.2). Hence, Hegel sees the key defect in Kant's system to be its inability to do justice to the "*manifold of connection*" that makes up its "determinate content." Kant confines himself to the categories and is unable to flesh out the determinate content of the objective cognition that the immanence of the universal to the objective reality implied. The idea here is that if we acknowledge that certain universal determinations make up the basic structure of actuality, we are also implicitly committed to the thesis that the relations and the "manifold of connections" that obtain between these elements make up the immanent structure of the actuality.

In order to gain a good understanding of what Hegel has in mind when he claims that Kant's conception of cognition fails to appreciate the "manifold of connections" between universal determinations and interrelatedness of the objects



of cognition through determinate content, we must look closely at what Kant means by *universality* and what role it plays in cognition. This shall also shed light on the question of to what extent Hegel's criticism is justified. For Kant *universality* is the *form* of concepts while their *matter* is the *objects* of experience. Hence, the issue of the relation between universality and empirical reality is directly tied to the relation between concepts and the empirical realm on the one hand, and between the concepts and their form on the other. Objects for Kant are not entities heterogeneous to the human intellect, but they are a certain subcategory of the determinations of the mind. His Copernican revolution, which turns on the insight that "the objects must conform to our cognition" (B XVI), is carried out through the internalization of the objects of experience (phenomena) to representations (the determinations of the mind): "an object ... is that in the concepts of which manifold of a give intuition is united" (B137). A *concept* for Kant is not merely "a general and reflected representation" but also a "consciousness of the unity of an act of synthesis of a sensible manifold;" in other words, concept is what underlies and guides the process of the unification of sensible intuitions furnishing objects of cognition. Hence, the conceptual content is present in the perceptual experience as integral elements of the rule of apprehension. To be sure, the outcome of the process of apprehension is not yet equivalent to full cognition, as the latter implies two additional syntheses: reproduction in imagination and subsumption under a concept (this time not as the rule of synthesis but universal and reflected representation). The former is merely an appearance, "undetermined objects of empirical intuition," thus it has not yet been determined, i.e., subsumed under a

concept and thus become *phenomenon* or “determined object of empirical intuition.” This, however, does not mean that the merely apprehended appearance is free of conceptual content, as a concept qua the unity of an act of synthesis has already been employed in the apprehension of sensible manifold.

Therefore, for Kant, conceptual content is present on both ends of the cognitive process. Initially, it is present as the schema of the synthesis of apprehension as a result of which the empirical reality as a plurality of appearances manifests themselves to the mind. At this level, concept is functioning as the “consciousness of the unity of an act of synthesis of a sensible manifold,” essentially as a function of unity through which appearances are perceived or taken in by the mind. This level of presence of conceptual content corresponds to what Kant in the *Prolegomena* calls *judgment of perception*. At this stage, the world taken in by the mind is appearing in a certain way, i.e., reality the way it manifests itself prior to being cognitively determined by the intellect. There is a second level of application of the concepts, this time at the other end of cognitive activity, wherein these appearances are subsumed under concepts. This second level of application of the concepts corresponds to what Kant in the *Prolegomena* calls *judgments of experience*. The question of the presence of “the manifold of connection” or the lack thereof can thus be addressed on these two different levels. But clearly, while the relations under consideration will be present in different form in the judgments of perception and the judgments of experience, they are without a doubt available on both levels. The concept that is used as the rule of apprehension has “the manifold of

connections” within it, as do the universal and reflected representation under which the appearances are subsumed.

As such, Robert Stern misses the point when contrasting Hegel’s positions with Kant’s regarding the immanence of concepts when he maintains that

I will claim that Kant’s idealism is subjective for Hegel in employing the activity of the synthesizing subject to explain the genesis and structure of the object, while Hegel’s idealism is objective in treating the substance-universal which it exemplifies as constituting the unity of the individual. As a result, whereas Kant’s philosophy is idealistic because it treats the unity of the object as dependent on the structure imposed on experience by the transcendental subject, Hegel’s philosophy is idealistic because it operates with a realist theory of universals, which have a fundamental place in his ontology. (Stern 1990, 110)

Stern’s reading of Kant misses a crucial point: “the synthesizing subject” is not combining in a random fashion manifolds of representations; rather, the object is formed through a *rule-guided synthesis*. And this rule through which “the structure of the object” is formed is nothing else but the concept or “the substance-universal” as Stern calls it. Therefore, the two positions are much closer than Stern would have it.

Kant’s well-known example about a savage perceiving a house for the first time can be helpful in clarifying the point here. While analyzing the differences between two cases of apprehension of representations of the very same object, one guided by a concept qua schema of synthesis of apprehension and the other that is not, Kant explains:

If, for example, a savage sees a house from a distance whose use he does not know, he admittedly has before him in his representation the very same object as someone else who knows it determinately as a dwelling established for human beings. But as to form, this cognition of one and the same object is different in the two cases. In the former it is mere intuition, in the latter it is simultaneously intuition and concept. (Logic, Introduction V, Ak. IX, 33; 544-45)

For Kant, both *intuition* and *concept* are perceptions or conscious representations, and both are related to an object (unlike mere sensations, which are perceptual state of subject only). In other words, they are related to something independent of the mind engaged in apprehension. The difference between them, however, is that while intuition is related to the object *immediately*, the concept is related to it *mediately*. Thus, someone who has the concept of house while apprehending the representations of the house has, according to Kant, both mediate and immediate representation of the object. The immediate element is the intuition, whereas the mediated is the schema, i.e., the rule that guides the synthesis of apprehension of this intuition. The manifold connections that Hegel refers to make up the relations between the elements that make up the internal structure of the rule and their relations with the content of other empirical concepts. For the savage who sees such an object for the first time, the rule that would enable him to apprehend the representation as a house is not available. But once the savage sees many similar objects and acquires the concept of house, the nature of his subsequent apprehensions will also change and it will have no longer merely intuition but

“simultaneously intuition and concept.” Therefore, his subsequent episodes of apprehension of similar objects will also have “the manifold of connections” in them.

At the same time, if the conceptual content involved in the genesis of experience of an object is an integral part of the network of determinations that are interrelated to one another, the objects the apprehension of which will involve these determinations will also be related to one another. For instance, if an apprehension of a house involves a concept of a house as a dwelling of human beings and hence one amongst a manifold of connections in place, there is the connection between the concept of a *house* and the concept of a *human*, then any particular house apprehended is related to any particular human apprehended due to the relation between the concepts that made individuation of these objects possible. Therefore, Hegel’s criticism of the lack of appreciation by Kant of the manifold of connections between the conceptual content involved in experience, as well as between the objects of experience, is not based on a charitable reading of his position to say the least.

But Kant is not blameless here as he rarely discusses the question of interrelation between the conceptual content of empirical concepts and the process of their formation. For Kant, the key question is the origin of the pure a priori concepts and the justification of their applicability in the cognition of empirical objects. Hegel, on the other hand, stresses the need for a closer attention to the manifold of relations that obtains between the determinations of thought and the interrelatedness of the objects individuated through these determinations.

Therefore, even if the criticism of Kant is based on an uncharitable reading on his position, it nevertheless reveals what Hegel sees as the aspect of the Kantian system that is in need of further development. Therefore, we can anticipate that tracing *the manifold of relations* between the determinations of thought will be one of the priorities in Hegel's appropriation of the Kantian system.

### 3.2) Kant as a Subjective Idealist

Another critical angle from which Hegel investigates Kant's position is its rigidly maintained distinction between the *subjective* and the *objective* moments of actuality. In Hegel's eye, Kant is maintaining the distinction between the subjective and the objective ontological spaces while wanting to ground the objective on the subjective:

That the categories should be regarded only as belonging to us, i.e. as subjective, must seem rather bizarre to the natural consciousness, and there is indeed something skewed about it.... Now although the categories (such as, unity, cause, effect, and so forth) do belong to thinking as such, it does not follow at all from this that they should for that reason be ours alone and not also determinations of the objects themselves. This, however, is supposed to be the case according to Kant's outlook. His philosophy is a subjective idealism. (EL §42, 87)

Hegel's criticism in this case appears to be quite on point. If Kant maintains that the categories originate in the logical forms of judgment and are the source of the objective purport to our representations, while he also wants to keep the thing-in-itself as a part of his system, then subjective idealism indeed seems to be an

inevitable outcome. The “objectivity” that is grounded on the subjective functions of the operation of the mind clearly appears as a watered-down version of the true actuality represented by the thing-in-itself. With the noumenal realm as its backdrop, any attempt to ground objectivity of the phenomena and its cognition on the specific constitution of the faculties of the subject indeed appears to inevitably lead to subjective idealism.

Very often, a solution to this problem is sought in a fundamental misinterpretation of the Kantian stance according to which sense perceptions are taken to be the source-conferring objectivity to the representations of the mind. Hegel is quite right to point out that, according to Kant, sensible intuitions are also states of the subject: “The categories are empty, having application and use only in experience, the other element of which, the determinations of feeling and intuition, are likewise something merely subjective”(EL §43, 88). Indeed, for Kant all representations, the subspecies of which are sensible intuitions as well as mere sensations, are “inner states of the mind.” What is different between mere sensations and intuitions is that while the former belong only to the subject, the latter in addition to that are also related to the objects of cognitions. But this objectivity, as Hegel points out, arises from another subjective element: the logical forms of judgment and the categories. Therefore, Hegel’s charge that the source of objectivity within the Kantian system is a highly problematic issue that is not dealt with in a satisfactory manner is not an unwarranted one.

The point here is that while all components of this objective realm are of subjective origin, when combined together, according to Kant, they somehow form objective determinations. A possible defense of Kant's position could be offered along the following lines: The knowledge derived from experience of the phenomenal reality is true only with qualification—it is true only as it appears to us, while things independent of our cognitive constitution, or things in themselves, are never accessible for us according to Kant, hence the “subjective” origins of objectivity cognition. However, Hegel thinks that this position amounts to nothing but an indirect admitting of skepticism—the impossibility of grasping the ultimate nature of reality. As he puts succinctly: “for Kant ... what we think is false just because we think it” (EL §60, 107). Therefore, we should expect the Hegelian transcendental ontology to, in one way or another, deal with the problem of the gap between the subjective and objective moments that he criticizes in Kant; additionally, determinations of thought will no longer be “ours alone” but will determine objective reality the way it is in itself and not merely as it appears to us.

### **3.3) Contradiction**

Another critical theme Hegel develops that I want to examine here is the epistemic function and the ontological status of *contradiction*. Hegel takes up the issue with Kant for whom reality is assumed to be free of contradiction, which is confined to the *subjective* side of Kant's bifurcated system. It is only the determinations of thought that can and do come to contradict each other, according



to Kant. Reality on the other hand is pre-postulated to be free of contradictions. In fact, this confining of contradiction to the subjective side is where Kant locates the key to his solution to the problems of paralogisms and antinomies: "The resolution is that the contradiction does not apply to the object in and of itself, but pertains solely to reason engaged in trying to know" (EL §48, 93). By limiting the scope of contradiction to the realm of thought, Kant is attempting to "save" the objective reality from it. In Hegel's eye, however, had Kant been more open to embrace the inner thrust of his own thought, he could have put the difficulties generated through these contradictions to his advantage, but Kant is too much a child of his own time and unable to free himself from the basic assumptions of both rationalistic and empiricist traditions.

Nevertheless, Hegel thinks it is still to Kant's credit that he uncovers the necessity of contradiction brought about by cognitive effort. He sees this as an important insight with far-reaching epistemological and ontological consequences.

This is where it is brought up that it is the content itself, namely the categories themselves, that bring about the contradiction. This thought that the contradiction posited in the realm of reason [am Vernunftigen] by the determinations of the understanding is essential and necessary must be regarded as one of the most important and profound advances in the philosophy of recent times. The resolution is as trivial as the view is profound. It consists merely in a tenderness for worldly things. It is not supposed to be the worldly essence that bears the blemish of contradiction, but it is supposed to fall to thinking reason alone, the essence of spirit. (EL §48, 93)

Clearly, for Hegel the Kantian “solution” to the antinomies and parallogisms does not measure up to the “problems” themselves. Hegel thinks that it is the “solution” that is the problem, while the “problem” is the key to the qualitatively higher philosophical vision that Kant could have brought about but fails to. While the full account of what Hegel has in mind by this missed opportunity shall be gradually emerging throughout the remaining chapters of the present work, we can already see some of its features hinted at in these passages in Hegel’s texts.

To begin with, it is clear that if Hegel is to develop the theme of groundedness of individuals on the universals, then the confinement of the contradictions to the realm of determinations of thought and sheltering the determination of things from it will become problematic. If the individuals are grounded on universals and hence the determinations of thought are immanent to them, so are the relations between these determinations. Further, Hegel is explicit that the number of necessary contradictions is not limited to those presented by Kant in the *Transcendental Dialectic*: “the main point that has to be made is that antinomy is found not only in the four particular objects taken from cosmology, but rather all objects of all kinds” (EL §48, 92.2). Claims like this have often been used in discrediting Hegel as an upholder of an utterly confused position, according to which for any true proposition “x is y,” there is at the same time corresponding true propositions “x is not y.” Were this a correct interpretation of his thought, Hegel could not have been ascribed to uphold any meaningful proposition. This is, however, not the most interesting reading of Hegel’s thesis, nor the one that best fits his philosophical system as a whole. If we recall the conclusion we drew earlier in

the chapter from Hegel's critical remarks on semantic atomism, hence his commitment to the strong interrelation between the determinations of thought, and combine it with another commitment of Hegel regarding the immanence of determinations of thought to "all objects of all kinds," then a very interesting perspective on the thesis about ubiquity of contradiction comes to the fore.

Robert Brandom points to this alternative by offering to read the contradiction thesis as a claim of necessary inadequacy of any system of empirical concepts wherein contradiction serves as an immanent source of their inevitable instability:

What we must realize to move to the standpoint of Vernunft is that we will always and necessarily be led to contradict ourselves by applying determinate concepts correctly—no matter how the world happens to be—and that it is in just this fact that the true nature of the immediacy, particularity, and actuality revealed to us in experience consists ... When Hegel says of the concrete that "the true, thus inwardly determinate, has the urge to develop," and that "The Understanding, in its pigeon-holing process, keeps the necessity and the Notion of the content to itself—all that constitutes the concreteness, the actuality, the living movement of the reality which it arranges," he means that no concepts with fixed, determinate boundaries can capture how things are in a way that will not turn out to require eventual revision. (Brandom 2004; Sketch of a Program for a Critical Reading of Hegel 13)

That is to say, the claim that "everything actual contains opposite determinations" (EL §48, 93.2) is not an attempt to reject the law of non-contradiction but its integration within the new ontological vision, according to which any system of empirical determinations of thought that immanently structure

actuality is intrinsically inadequate. This means that when the inferential relations are pursued far enough, any given constellation of empirical concepts and doxastic commitments will inevitably lead to mutually contradicting claims. This in turn calls for a revision and continuous redefinition of the content of empirical concepts that constitute the basic determinations of actuality, throughout the revisions of which transfiguration of not only the meaning of the empirical concepts but also the basic fabric of actuality is taking place. While I shall repeatedly return to Brandom's reading in the subsequent chapters, the centrality of the contradiction to the Hegelian project shall become evident already in the next chapter where the determinations of reflections are considered in depth.

## **4) Conclusion**

Having looked at the major critical themes Hegel develops in his examination of the key alternative doctrines, the following conclusions can be made:

- 1) Hegel's transcendental ontology shall offer an alternative to the traditional dualistic metaphysics and the representation theory of knowledge. Division of the world into two realms, *represented* vs. *representations* that takes the mind to be a kind of mirror and the

concepts as generalized versions of the images reflected in it, has to be replaced with a model that leaves behind this bifurcated picture and the plethora of the ontological and epistemological problems that arise from it. As we see, Hegel understands Kant's postulation of the thing-in-itself to render his critical system into one more example of the dualistic ontology. As the subsequent chapters shall show, the Hegelian alternative will make a turn along the lines of what Brandom describes as substituting *representation* with *expression* as the master concept of epistemological doctrine. The conceptual content in this model is hinged not on the external reality, which it purportedly replicates, but on the process of the application of empirical determinations through which the implicit content is made explicit and the individual determinations are given meaning as elements of the systematically related constellation of determinations.

- 2) The traditional approach of taking the sensations as the source of content for universal determinations shall be replaced with an account of the universals as the immanent grounds of individuation of entities that we "find" in the world. These universals, instead of being self-sufficient atomic determinations, derive their meaning from their relation to the other determination, together with which they make up a systemic whole. As such, the relations between the concepts serve as the background condition on which individual determinations are grounded. The relations between elements of the system making up the totality of

conceptual content will play the key role in constituting individual determinations, and, as we have seen, Hegel indicates that *contradiction* will play a very important role amongst them. I shall examine this issue in the following chapter.

- 3) The third general strategic line that can be extracted from Hegel's critical analysis of alternatives doctrines is his aim to put forth an ontological vision that is marked with the radical plasticity of actuality as its key feature. This plasticity is what sets his stance apart from the doctrines like that of empiricists that he saw as philosophy of unfreedom. Concepts, instead of representing pre-existing reality, are the nodes in a network of interrelated and continuously revised system of universal determinations, which not only constitute the objects but also constitute them differently, and are different objects at successor stages of the continuously transforming system. Hegel's master word, *dialectic*, is this movement of self-determination of interconnected constellation of concepts within which any determination is perpetually subjected to dissolution and re-determination.

## CHAPTER 3: Determinations of Reflection and Generation of Conceptual Content

### 1) Essence as Truth of Being

Hegel's striking claim with which he opens the *Doctrine of Essence*, "The truth of being is essence" (WL 337), is a clear testimony of the important role that this central part of the *Logic* occupies in his transcendental ontology. Here is how Hegel describes the relation between the previous part of the *Logic*, the *Doctrine of Being*, and the one that he is about to present, the *Doctrine of Essence*: "behind this being there still is something other than being itself, and ... this background [essence] constitutes the truth of being" (WL 337). Hence, while presenting the basic determinations of the essence Hegel is laying out the "background," the underlying structure of being and its determinations. Here we can clearly see the traces of the Kantian move of grounding objects on determinations of thought—an empirical entity that is out there in the world is conditioned by the act of synthesis guided by a rule that constitute its essence. What Hegel is doing in this part of the *Logic* is to give a detailed account of the process (and its determinate features) through which the essence as the ground of being is furnished, the inner architectonics of "this background [that] constitutes the truth of being."

## 2) Reflection as the Process of Generation of Essence

Hegel sees *reflection* as the modality of operation of Essence. This is already made evident in the title of the opening section of the *Doctrine of Essence*: “Essence as Reflection Within Itself,” as well as the numerous claims of the following kind “in its self-movement, essence is reflection” (WL 345) and “essence is reflection. Reflection determines itself; its determinations are a positedness which is immanent reflection at the same time” (WL 340). Thus, reflection and its basic determinations, or *essentialities*, play the central role in the doctrine of essence and Hegel’s ontology in general. Indeed, as my analysis shall demonstrate, the determinations of reflection or the essentialities are the most elementary functions that guide the activity of the generation of conceptual content—the content that serves as the medium of our cognitive relation to actuality, as well as the content through which entities comprising this actuality are individuated.

Dieter Henrich has describes “the basic operations” discussed by Hegel in “the chapter on ‘Reflection’ at the beginning of the ‘Logic of Essence’” as “the core and the key” to *The Science of Logic* (Henrich 2003, 319). Reflection therefore comes to the fore as the main mechanism of the generation of the space of reason. It is the process of formation of the systematically related constellation of determinations. As such, close attention to *reflection* and its basic determinations is



necessary for proper understanding of the *Logic* and the ontological doctrine laid out therein.

A natural question to ask at this point is how the thesis “the truth of being is essence” (WL 337) and the identification of essence with reflection and its basic functions (i.e., essentialities) square with another crucial thesis of Hegel’s ontology offered later in the *Logic*: “reality properly comprehended is the concept.” In other words, how should we make sense of the relation between the reflection and its essentialities that make up the schema of essence on the one hand, and on the other, the concept—the fundamental ontological substructure Hegel introduces at a more developed stage of his *Logic*? Longuenesse offers a good starting point for understanding this relationship by tying the unifying or self-relational dynamic moment of the concept with reflection that gradually manifests itself as the moving force in the unfolding of the *Logic*.

In Being (expounded in Part 1, Book 1 of the Science of Logic), the concept and its aim of the true are only implicit; the determinations of the object are received as immediate, and the mediation of their mutations by the movement of the concept is masked. This is why they “pass” into one another, without an explicit unifying principle. In reflection, or Essence (expounded in Part 1, Book 2) the role of the unity of the concept in pushing forward the movement of determinations is made explicit, although the concept does not yet manifest its capacity to produce from itself all determinations. ... In contrast, in the concept (expounded in Part 2 of the Science of Logic), each determination is produced from the unity of thought, and reflection is now a development (*Entwicklung*) of the concept rather than the “shining into another” that it is in essence. (Longuenesse 2007, 34)

Hence, reflection is integrated within the larger ontological structure with clear Kantian roots as its self-relational or unifying aspect. In Being, this activity of the concept has not come to the surface yet; the development and transition from one determination of Being to another, although conditioned by this activity of the concept, is never made manifest. Reflection comes to the fore in the Doctrine of Essence, where Hegel takes up explicitly the drive to the unification, the self-relational activity of thought. The difference between the Doctrines of Essence and the Concept, according to Longuenesse, lies in the degree of assimilation of everything external to the reflective activity of thought. In the former there is still content given to the reflection that is taken as standing external to it. The complete self-relational transparency is not yet accomplished, which serves as the impetus for the continuous effort of reflection. In the latter, this resistance to unity has been overcome and all determinations are acknowledged as the products of the activity of thought. Longuenesse is right, indeed: The complete integration of determinations within the self-related holistic unity is one of the key developments that becomes accomplished in the concept, but it needs to be mentioned that this activity is integrated within the fundamental ontological substructure that Hegel calls the *concept* as one of its three moments, the moment that Hegel will describe as the creative power that produces all determinations: *universality*.

### 3) Determinations of Reflection as the Basic Functions Through Which Conceptual Content is Generated

The determinations of reflection, or essentialities, include *identity, difference, diversity, opposition, and contradiction*. This is the list of the basic functions that guide the process of reflection in its effort of generating conceptual content. Hegel claims that these fundamental forms were traditionally taken as “the universal laws” that are “accepted as true by all thinking that grasps their meaning”:

The determinations of reflection have customarily been singled out in the form of propositions which were said to apply to everything. They were said to have the status of universal laws of thought that lie at the base of all thinking; to be inherently absolute and indemonstrable but immediately and indisputably recognized and accepted as true by all thought upon grasping their meaning. (WL 409.6)

The question that used to be ignored and thus left unanswered by the tradition was this: What is the reason behind this apparent self-evidence of the universal laws of thought? Of note at this point is that Hegel is not merely raising the theme of analytic vs. synthetic relations. In other words, he is not repeating the Kantian thesis that what the tradition took for analytic was in reality synthetic and thus presupposed the unifying activity of thought. Hegel wants to go further and assert that even the most basic analytic relations imply functions of thought that need to be closely examined. The self-evidence of the universal laws of thought, such as “everything is identical with itself,” needs to be demystified and the ground for their

validity have to be made explicit. Once this is done, Hegel claims that we shall discern a relational structure of the most basic determinations that are present even on this level. The essentialities and the universal laws that correspond to them are not the atomic units given as the most basic pieces of the mosaic that make up actuality. "In the form of the proposition, therefore, in which identity is expressed, there lies more than simple, abstract identity; in it, there lies this pure movement of reflection in which the other appears as *schein*" (WL 415.4). Instead, they are the functions of thought, the reflective activity, which, when closely examined, reveal relatedness to one another.

Now, a striking testimony of the Kantian origins of Hegel's project emerges from how closely the determinations of reflection deduced and examined by Hegel in the Doctrine of Essence correspond to the concepts of comparison that Kant presents in *The Amphiboly* chapter of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Kant's goal in *Amphiboly* is to distinguish between the reflection that compares concept and the reflection that compares sensible representations. The concepts concerned in *Amphiboly* include identity and difference, agreement and conflict, inner and outer, and matter and form. Kant also draws an explicit parallel between the concepts of comparison and the logical forms of judgment "Prior to all objective judgments we compare the concepts, with respect to identity (of many representations under one concept) for the sake of universal judgments, or their difference, for the generation of particular ones, with regard to agreement, for affirmative judgments, or opposition, for negative ones, etc." (A262/B318). As Longuenesse has shown in her detailed study of the concepts of comparison, they are, for Kant, the basic operations

of thought involved in the generation of empirical concepts. The first three pairs of the concepts of comparison correspond almost one to one to *the determinations of reflection* from *The Essence* chapter of Hegel's *Logic*, while the last pair that deals with the modality of judgment is also reflected in the Hegelian system, as we shall see. Hence, in what follows I shall first present Kant's account of the concepts of comparison in a manner that closely follows Longuenesse's detailed analysis of them. Through this analysis, it shall also become apparent that the concepts of comparison correspond to the logical functions of judgment. Having gained a good understanding of the key element of the Kantian system, I shall return to Hegel's text, take a close look at his deduction of the determinations of reflection, and draw the relation between the Kantian and the Hegelian accounts of the elementary function of thought that generates empirical determinations. This side-by-side reading of Kant's and Hegel's texts should allow us to see how much light can we shed on the role that the Hegelian determinations of reflection play in the generation of empirical concept based on illuminating the corresponding function of concepts of comparison in the Kantian system.

#### **4) Longuenesse's Thesis About the Key Role of the Concepts of Comparison in Concept-Generation**

Hegel's discussion of essentialities and reflection in general makes it clear that these operations are the elemental functions of the activity of thought through which conceptual content is generated. However, Hegel focuses on their deduction and the articulation of the relations between the determinations of reflection, instead of presenting an account of how exactly they are employed in the process of generating empirical concepts. In other words, Hegel is mostly concerned with demonstrating how identity implies operation of reflection that is tied to differentiation, which in turn is related to diversity, etc. But he takes for granted the transparency of *how* these interrelated determinations function as the basic operations guiding the process of the generation of conceptual content. It is interesting that Beatrice Longuenesse makes a similar observation regarding Kant. As she points out, in *The Critique of Pure Reason* Kant also assumes the familiarity of his readers about the use of concept of comparison in the generation of empirical concepts. Kant is explicit about it only in his lectures on Logic (Longuenesse 1998, 131-132).

The first thing to note about the Kantian concepts of comparison (or the concepts of reflection, as Kant also calls them) is that they are a very specific kind of concepts. Instead of being concepts of object and their properties, Kantian concepts of reflection represent the forms of activity of comparison that the mind is engaged in. Now Kant's discussion in *Amphiboly* focuses on the employment of these concepts in comparison of concepts in judgments, but as Beatrice Longuenesse conclusively demonstrates, the very same operations are involved in the activity of the generation of new concepts. "[I]n its fully achieved discursive form is a

comparison of concepts, but in ‘silent,’ or embryonic form, is a comparison of sensible representations in order to form concepts” (Longuenesse 1998, 124). Hence, these basic functions of the operation of the mind, which Kant calls *concepts of comparison* or *concepts of reflection* and Hegel presents as *determinations of reflection* or *essentialities*, are in operation both with building concepts from sensations (singular and immediate representations) and from already available concepts (universal and reflected representations).

An exploration of the Kantian *concepts of reflection* and identifying their correspondence with the Hegelian *determinations of reflection* from the Doctrine of Essence shall help us to clarify the role of these determinations in the generation of empirical content and subsequently the aspect of Hegel’s theory of the concepts that is associated with the determination-generating activity. In other words, with illuminating the way in which these functions guide the process of generation of conceptual content, we shall shed light on the internal structure of that moment of the Hegelian notion of the Concept, which is associated with conceptual content generation—the *universality*. As such, what follows in this chapter is an exploration of the internal architectonics of the *universal* moment of the Concept, to the close study of which I shall turn in the subsequent two chapters of this work.

#### **4.1) Identity and difference**

The first pair of concepts Kant considers is *identity* and *difference*, which he associates with the *quantitative* judgment. Identity corresponds to the universal,

and difference to particular judgment. “Prior to all objective judgments we compare the concepts, with respect to identity (of many representations under one concept) for the sake of universal judgments, or their difference, for the generation of particular ones” (A262/B317). The identity we are dealing with in universal judgment obtains in relation between the determinations falling under the subject-concept in regard to the predicate-concept. For example, statements such as “All bodies are divisible,” or stated more generally “all As are B,” assert the identity not of the concepts of A and B but of those determinations that are thought under A with respect to the concept B. In other words, the statement means: this x-body is divisible, that y-body is also divisible, another z-body is divisible as well, etc. Hence, “All bodies are divisible.”

On the other hand, particular judgment, such as “Some divisible things are bodies,” or stated more generally, “some As are B,” introduce *difference*—while this divisible-x (for example, this desk) is a body, but that divisible-y (for example, the time interval used to write this sentence) is not. In other words, x and y are *different* with respect to the concept of “body.” In this respect, x and y that are both thought under the concepts of divisibility are determined as *different* with respect to their relation to the concept of body. If, in the case of universal judgment, all determinations falling under the concept were identical in regard to their relation to concept B, with particular judgment they are differentiated into groups with different relations to the concept B. In other words, when applying the concept of comparison *identity and difference* we are engaging in the process of reflection that is aiming at determining the *extension* of the domains of the two concepts that are



being compared. This internal differentiation of the initial self-unity is what we shall see when Hegel introduces *difference* as the second determination of reflection after *identity*. Both Kant and Hegel present identity and difference as the unity and its internal differentiation. With Kant, the extension of the one determination is differentiated into two parts, one belonging to another determination and the other excluded from it. With Hegel, as we shall see, the very same move of internal differentiation of the unity will be restated in more general terms.

Now, according to Longuenesse, the very same formal structures are guiding our conceptual-content-generating activity.

[I]n order to form concepts, we sift through our sensible representations by means of our concepts of comparison, which thus guide the formation of concepts for judgments. Recognition of the (generic) identity of the “rule of our apprehension” in different representations yields a universal judgment. Recognition of the difference of the “rule of our apprehension” in various representations yields particular judgment. (Longuenesse 1998, 134)

In other words, it is through the identifying and differentiating activities of the mind engaged in the process of apprehension of representations that new determinations are generated. The process of reflection that attends apprehension of a variety of representations and is guided by these functions of comparison is geared to generating new empirical concepts. For example, this tree (x), that tree (y), and another tree (z) all have such and such identical types of leaves, trunks, branches, etc., which differentiates them from numerous other representations that are also apprehended as trees. Based on the shared properties that set these trees apart

from others, I can arrive at a new concept that includes the shared properties, a concept under which falls a certain subcategory of the object apprehended as trees.

## 4.2) Agreement and Opposition

The second pair of the concepts of comparison Kant considers is *agreement* and *conflict*. “Prior to all objective judgments we compare the concepts, ... with regard to agreement, for affirmative judgments, or opposition, for negative ones, etc.” (A262/B318). In relating two determinations to each other, not only do we specify how they are related regarding their *extension*—whether one is fully or only partially included in the other—we also determine whether this relation of extensions is positive or negative. In other words, we are making the determination of whether the extension of one concept is fully included (agreement) within the domain of the other, or fully excluded (opposition) from it; or whether they are partially included or partially excluded from each other. If *identity* and *difference* were related to *quantitative* judgment, the *agreements* and *opposition* are related to *qualitative* judgments (affirmative vs. negative). Hence, with the two pairs of already-considered concepts of comparison, we can have four different ways of relating determinations: identical agreement, or “all As are B”; identical opposition, or “no As are B”; differentiated agreement, or “some As are B”; and differentiated opposition, or “some As are not B.”

Longuenesse relates the second pair of functions, agreement and conflict, with the previous one as mutually implying each other: “These two concepts of

comparison [agreement and conflict], and the acts of comparison they guide and reflect, are clearly inseparable from identity and difference. Earlier, we saw how judgments such as 'all As are B' presuppose acts of comparison with respect to identity. But comparison with respect to agreement is clearly involved as well: as to its content, B is in agreement with A" (Longuenesse 1998, 138). In other words, within the process of reflection that *identifies* one determination with another is involved *agreement* between their respective acts of apprehension, just as the process of *differentiation* involves registering an *opposition*. Delineation of *extensional* relations between determinations is inseparably tied with discerning *agreement* and *conflict* between their respective *contents*. We shall see that Hegel will advance a similar point in his discussion of determinations of reflection by deducing the relations of *diversity* and *opposition* from differentiation of self-identical unity. That is to say, just as with Kant, identification and differentiation implies discerning *agreement* and *conflict*, so with Hegel identification and differentiation implies *diversity* and *opposition*.

Therefore, together with *identity* and *difference* as the functions that guide the process of the generation of empirical content are also involved *agreement* and *conflict* as integral elements of the very same activity. In other words, the process of generating empirical concepts involves reflection that is searching for instances of apprehension of representations that are in *agreement* and/or *conflict* with one another and through discerning such relations gradually augmenting the content of existing concepts, forming new ones, etc.

### 4.3) Inner and Outer

In addition to identity/difference and agreement/opposition, the concepts of reflection involved in the generation of empirical determinations, according to Kant, also include *inner* and *outer*. If the previous two pairs of concepts were related to quantitative and qualitative judgments, the present one corresponds to the judgment or relation: "If we reflect merely logically, then we simply compare our concepts with each other in the understanding, seeing whether two of them contain the very same thing, whether they contradict each other or not, whether something is contained in the concept internally or is added to it" (A279/B335). The *inner* relation between the determinations being related stands for attributing the predicate-determination to the subject determination without any external condition. In other words, there are no additional conditions that need to obtain in order to predicate the former to the latter. "All trees have branches" or "some trees are evergreen" would be examples of such a relation. This form of relation corresponds to *categorical* judgment. The *outer* relation, on the other hand, needs some external condition to be obtained, which necessitates the attribution of predicate-determination to the subject determination. An example of this could be "if roots of a tree are cut off, the tree will die." Moreover, this external condition does not have to be related to the subject-determination: The *outer* relation can have not only the form of "If A is X, then A is Y" but also "If A is X, then B is Y." For example, "If Professor Kant walks by, the clocks will strike four times" or "If the

climate dramatically changes, many animal species will perish.” One more important thing to note here is that, if with the other concepts of reflection we were relating two determinations, now we are relating two relations. As such, *inner/outer* formal functions are geared to articulating complex systematic relations between determinations and the relations between determinations. It is the systematizing function immanent to the determination-generating process.

These functions (*inner* and *outer*), together with the two above-discussed pairs (identity/difference and agreement/conflict), are not merely used to relate already-existing concepts, but also are guiding the process of reflection through which conceptual content of empirical determinations is generated. In the process of the formation of empirical concepts, we examine appearances with the aim to discern the formal structure of either *inner* or *outer* relations between its determinations. For example, we observe that this x, which is a tree, has branches, and that y, which is also cognized as tree, has branches as well. We repeat this process until we eventually come up with a general rule that states that *trees have braches*. This is clearly an example of an *inner* relationship discerned amongst apprehended representations. On the other hand, we can also parse experiences with the aim of identifying *external* conditions under which new states of affairs will be obtained. For example, if this piece of metal x is heated it melts, if that other piece of metal y is heated, it also will be transformed from solid into fluid state, etc. Thus I arrive at a general rule that *if metal is heated, it melts*. This is clearly an example of an *outer* relation between the concepts of metal and fluid, established based on the external condition of *increased temperature*.

The search for the inner and outer relations between the determinations offered through experience is what constitutes the process of looking for regularities in nature and identifying empirical laws. This is what Kant has in mind when claiming in the Transcendental Deduction that understanding is continuously busy with “scrutinizing appearances in search for rules” (A126). Empirical laws of nature are nothing but a system of interrelated concepts that articulate rules of *inner* and *outer* relation. The former present the features that the given determination possesses due to its own constitution, while the latter articulate the necessary course of development if specific conditions are to obtain. It is important to note here that with the *necessity* involved in both the inner and the outer relations corresponding to the hypothetical judgments (“all As are B,” which is the same as “all x-s that are A, are also B”; “if A is L then A is M”; or “if A is K then B is M”) is implied another relational category: *contradiction*. This can be made evident from the fact that the very same relations can be formulated as a contradiction between two propositions, respectively, between “x is A” and “x is not B,” “A is L” and “A is not M,” or again between “A is X” and “B is not Y.” Here two relations that are perfectly non-problematic when taken on their own cannot be asserted together due to their mutual contradiction to each other. As we shall see, contradiction is the last element in the system of determinations of reflection that Hegel presents in the *Essence* chapter, and, indeed, here with Kant as well, it completes the portion of the concepts of reflection that is involved in the generation of conceptual content. The last remaining pair, *matter* and *form*, as we shall soon see, has a different function.

#### 4.4) Matter and Form

Kant opens his discussion of the fourth and the last pair of concepts of comparison with the following claim: "Matter and form. These are two concepts that ground all other reflection, so inseparably are they bound up with every use of the understanding. The former signifies the determinable in general, the latter its determination" (A266/B322). Hence, while the previous three pairs of concepts were specific functions guiding reflection in the process of the generation of empirical concepts, *matter* and *form* are seen by Kant to perform a somewhat different role. Instead of being specific forms of relating determinations, matter and form describe the totality of reflective activity that has the previously discussed six forms as the immanent functions of its operation. Kant goes even further and claims that they not only "ground reflection" but also are "inseparably ... bound up with every use of the understanding" To the broader meaning of this claim I shall return shortly, but for now we are looking at the application of these functions that is geared to generating new conceptual content. For Kant the process guided by the concepts of comparison through which empirical determinations are formed is nothing but the application of *form* onto *matter* or *determination* of *determinable*. But if we keep in mind that the outcome of this application is the generation of new concepts that is *matter* of the logical forms of judgment, we can conclude that the application of forms of thought (concepts of comparison that correspond to the logical forms of judgment) is geared to generating the matter of thought (concepts). In other words, the very same functions that relate already formed concepts are also the functions through which these concepts are generated. As Longuenesse puts it,

“The thesis that the concepts of comparison, ‘inner’ and ‘outer,’ ‘agreement’ and ‘conflict,’ ‘identity’ and ‘difference,’ guide the formation of concepts from the sensible given is equivalent to saying that the *matter* of all thought (viz. concepts) is generated by the very activity that combines concepts in accordance with its proper *form* (the forms of judgment)” (Longuenesse 1998, 162).

Indeed, as we have seen, the previous three pairs of concepts of comparison correspond to the logical forms of judgment: the forms that related concepts with respect to their extension—to the quantitative judgment; with respect to their content to the qualitative judgment; and with respect to the inner/out conditionality of their interrelations to the judgments of relation. Hence, one ought not to be surprised that the conceptual content generated via the application of the concepts of comparison will be amenable to the logical forms of judgment. Empirical concepts, which are the matter to which the forms of judgments are applied, are generated through the process guided by the functions that correspond one-to-one to these very functions of judgments.

The fact that the fourth pair of the concepts of reflection is—different from the previously considered ones—not additional formal elements that determine the activity of thought engaged in the generation of determinations is a reflection of the correspondence between the logical functions of judgment on which the categories are based and the concepts of comparison. In the case of the logical functions of judgment also, Kant explicitly states that the judgments of modality *do not add anything new to the content* of relations offered in the table; “the modality of



judgments is a quite special function of them, which is distinctive in that it contributes nothing to the content of the judgment (for besides quantity, quality, and relation there is nothing more that constitutes the content of judgment), but rather concerns only the value of the copula in relation to thinking in general” (A74/B100).

Hence, as is the case with the concepts of comparison *matter* and *form*, so with the judgments of modality the very same theme of the totality of thought comes to the fore. In the former case, instead of specific forms of reflection (such as with identity, difference, etc.), we were dealing with the whole process of application of these functions. In the latter case, the modality of a proposition relies on the totality of empirical knowledge as its background. To better understand the meaning of this last point we can recall Kant’s distinction between problematic, assertoric, and apodictic judgments: “Problematic judgments are those in which one regards the assertion or denial as merely possible (arbitrary). Assertoric judgments are those in which it is considered actual (true). Apodictic judgments are those in which it is seen as necessary” (A75/B100). To see what Kant means here, let’s consider the distinction between assertoric and apodictic judgments. The relation between them can be described as follows: The generation of apodictic judgments is accomplished via the gradual accumulation of the assertoric types of judgments. Thus, if I observe that this swan is white, that another swan is also white, yet another one is white as well, I can finally conclude with a general rule that *all swans are white*. But it is important to note here that this is only possible if the totality of empirical experience does not include contrary cases, i.e., there are no black swans, in this

case. Hence, without the totality of empirical knowledge as the background, the distinction between the assertoric and apodictic judgments of empirical laws makes no sense. The same point can be made regarding the difference between problematic and assertoric judgments.

As we have seen in the above-cited passage, Kant claims that the concepts of *matter* and *form* are not only applicable to the activity of the generation of empirical concepts, but they in general are “inseparably bound up with every use of the understanding.” Now, *understanding* for Kant means our active faculty of cognition, which he also often describes as spontaneity and contrasts with sensibility as the passive faculty of receptivity; and includes three types of actions of the mind: formation of concepts, subsuming objects under concepts as well as lower concepts to higher concepts, and formation of inferences. My discussion here has been mostly focusing on the formation of concepts and how application of the logical functions of judgment in this process yields generation of conceptual content. But Kant makes clear that the application of *form* for the generation of *matter* is taking place not only in this but “with every use of the understanding.” In other words, the matter/form relation can be discerned on a lower level where the concepts are not matter but the forms and the objects are their matter (subsuming objects under concepts), as well as on a higher level where the judgments themselves are the matter of the inferences (formation of inferences). As Longuenesse puts it,

we can go further in our use of the concepts “matter” and “form” to reflect the generation of concepts through comparison/reflection/abstraction. (1) We can go further down, toward the determinable, and consider

the matter for which the concepts themselves are the form, namely the object. (2) We can go further up, toward the determination, and consider the form for which judgments are the matter, namely forms of inference, and the form of a system in general. (Longuenesse 162)

The concepts of comparison, the role of which in the generation of empirical concepts we have examined, are also asserted to be ingrained in the empirical objects themselves as the immanent elements of their constitutive structure. This is apparent from the way Kant conceives objects of experience—for him they are grounded on the rule-guided synthesis of intuitions, these rules of synthesis being empirical concepts. As we have seen, however, the generation of empirical concepts is nothing but the application of forms on matter, that is, formation of determination through the activity of the mind guided by the functions present in the previous three pairs of the concepts of comparison. Hence, the form-matter relation within the concepts implies the form-matter relation within the objects of experience. But we can look at this issue from another angle by recalling Kant's notion of the *transcendental object* from the first edition of *The Critique of Pure Reason*, which is basically the formal structure made up of the logical functions of judgment and is present in every object of cognition as the very condition of its possibility, as its immanent formal structure. The transcendental object, comprised of the functions of unity identical to those of the concepts of comparison, is therefore a necessary condition without which no combination of representations into an object of experience is possible.

The pure concept of this transcendental object (which in all of our cognitions is really always one and the same = X) is that which in all of our empirical concepts in general can provide relation to an object, i.e., objective reality. Now this concept cannot contain any determinate intuition at all, and therefore concerns nothing but that unity which must be encountered in a manifold of cognition insofar as it stands in relation to an object. This relation, however, is nothing other than the necessary unity of consciousness, thus also of synthesis of the manifold through a common function of the mind for combining it in one representation. Now since this unity must be regarded as necessary a priori (since the cognition would otherwise be without an object), the relation to a transcendental object, i.e., the objective reality of our empirical cognition, rests on the transcendental law that all appearances, insofar as objects are to be given to us through them, must stand under a priori rules of their synthetic unity. (A109)

Thus, the logical functions of judgment comprising the formal structure of the transcendental object are the elements that afford “objective reality” to the synthesis of sensible intuitions. Now, as we have seen, these functions correspond and are formally identical to the concepts of comparison, and the process of reflection guided by these concepts is described by Kant as an imposition of form on matter. Therefore, matter and form, which are described by Kant as the “two concepts that ground all other reflection” guided by the remaining six concepts of comparison, are present not only on the level of generation of empirical concepts but also on the level of formative synthesis of objects of representation. In fact, the generation of empirical objects out of sensible given is nothing but the process of combination of the latter in accordance to the formal structure of the transcendental object, hence the generation of the form within the matter.

The matter-form relation can be discerned not only on this “lower” level, but also on the “higher” level where the judgments themselves are the matter and the inferential relations that structure them aiming to give them systematic unity—their form. Kant presents a lengthy discussion of this drive toward systematic unity in the Introduction to *The Critique of Judgment*. Reflective activity is guided by the very same functions that generate empirical concepts and objects of experience while searching for the patterns of systematic relations between judgments and aiming at tying them through inferential relations into a unified whole. Hence, the reflective activity as the form-generating process that immanently structures its matter is present on all levels of the Kantian transcendental system—from the generation of empirical objects of representation, via the generation of concepts, all the way to the unified theories structuring the judgments into a systematic whole.

## 5) The Form–Matter Relation in Hegel’s Concept

It is striking that the exactly same relation between *form* and *matter* we have just seen in Kant is present on the most fundamental level of Hegel’s ontology—his theory of the *Concept*. Moreover, as is the case with Kant, here it is also related to the process of the generation of conceptual content. The *Concept*, which I shall examine closely in the remaining two chapters, is the kernel of Hegel’s ontological theory; it is his vision of actuality properly comprehended. For Hegel the *Concept* is a complex relational structure consisting of three moments: *universality*, *particularity*, and *individuality*. Now the relation between the key moment of this

fundamental ontological structure, *universality*, with another moment, *particularity*, is described by Hegel as that of the *form* to the *content*. Moreover, the *universal* moment of the *concept* is presented as the activity, or “creative force,” through which conceptual content is generated. The particular moment, on the other hand, is the system of determinations produced by *universality*. The similarities with Kant don’t end here, as even the terminology Hegel uses in describing the universal as the process (e.g., absolute self-identity positing *differences*, generating particular determinations as *diversity*, etc.) is clearly reminiscent of the Kantian account of the generation of concepts, as the logical functions of judgment for Kant are identical to the transcendental apperception—they are the functions of self-relation (§19, CPR). We shall also see that Hegel, while discussing the universal moment as the process of generating conceptual content, makes numerous direct references to the *Essence* chapter of the *Logic*, where determinations of reflection corresponding to the Kantian concepts of comparison and logical functions of judgment are presented.

Here is a passage where Hegel describes the positing of determinations by the universal as a generation of differentiated content in relation to which it (the universal moment) functions as the form:

The particular has this universality in it as its essence; but in so far as the determinateness of the difference is posited and thereby has being, the universality is form in it, and the determinateness as such is its content. Universality becomes form inasmuch as the difference is something essential, just as in the pure universal it is, on the contrary, only absolute negativity and not a difference posited as such. (WL 536, 12:39)

The “pure universal” is thus absolute negativity, the activity that aims at the generation of the differentiated determinations and it is related to its product as the form to the content. Just like Kant’s form-matter relation was referring to the activity of reflection through which empirical concepts were generated, so here the universal as the form posits differentiated determinations and is related to them as to its content. Here is another passage where Hegel describes the *universality* as the “creative power” that posits determinate content through self-differentiation and refers to universality as the *form* associated with “creativity of the concept”:

It [universality] is creative power as self-referring absolute negativity. As such, it differentiates itself internally, and this is a determining, because the differentiating is one with the universality. Accordingly, it is a positing of differences that are themselves universals, self-referring. They become thereby fixed, isolated differences. The isolated subsistence of the finite that was earlier determined as its being-for-itself, also as thinghood, as substance, is in its truth universality, the form with which the infinite concept clothes its differences – a form which is equally itself one of its differences. Herein consists the creativity of the concept, a creativity which is to be comprehended only in the concept’s innermost core. (WL 533-34, 12:36-37)

Hence, the Kantian activity of reflection geared to generating empirical concepts and guided by the concepts of comparison is appropriated by Hegel as the universal moment of his basic ontological structure: the *Concept*. The detailed examination of the universal moment, as well as of the *Concept* in general, will be undertaken in subsequent chapters. Here I shall look at that part of the *Doctrine of Essence* where

Hegel deduces the basic functions corresponding to the concepts of comparison. He calls them *determinations of reflection* or *essentialities*.

Having considered how the Kantian concepts of reflection guide the process of the generation of empirical concepts and having seen the correspondence between them and the Hegelian determinations of reflection, we can already make some preliminary conclusions about the function of the latter in regard to the empirical concepts even before moving to a close analysis of their deduction. It is clear that the determinations of reflection, or essentialities, are not the fundamental elements making up the ontological landscape (the elaboration of the basic “furniture” of actuality is the task most directly undertaken in the *Doctrine of Being*). Instead, they are the most basic formal functions guiding the activity that generates this landscape. In other words, *identity*, *difference*, *diversity*, etc., are not primarily the constituent parts found in the world and represented by the mind, but the basic functions of activity that generate determinate content of these entities. The essentialities are the formal features that guide the process of the generation of empirical concepts, and therefore also of the entities individuated through them. The self-*identity* of any determination, its *difference* from another, etc., are not the properties that these determinations have in themselves as independent of process of reflection, but the most elementary forms involved in the process of their formation. They can surely be “discovered” when one reflects on the entities and their relations to one another, but not because they originate somewhere outside of the domain of reflection, but because they have been ingrained within the



determinations that serve as the condition of the possibility of individuation of these entities.

What is taking place in the *Essentialities* chapter is a deduction of these interrelated functions of thought, identity and difference, diversity and contradiction, etc., which are the basic forms of the operation of the determination-generating process that are connected to one another with necessity. The point is that when something is comprehended as *self-identical*, it is also implicitly comprehended as *different* from something else, and vice versa. What is not taking place in this chapter is the articulation of qualities that each entity taken by itself or together with others has, independently of thought and merely represented in thought. Hence, the well-known criticism of Hegel, as having maintained that everything is self-contradictory and contradiction is the feature of every single entity encountered in the world, completely misses the point. Contradiction, just as other determinations of reflection, is a feature not of the self-sufficient independent entities given to the mind, but of the process of the generation of the conditions of individuation of these entities. I shall return to this point after giving a close treatment of this and other determinations of reflection.

## 6) Identity

The first determination of reflection is *Identity*. Hegel describes it as “the immediacy of reflection. It is not that equality-with-self that *being* or even *nothing* is, but the equality-with-self that has brought itself to unity ... pure origination from

and within itself, essential identity” (WL 411.4). The first thing that needs to be noted here is both clear surface-level similarity and the radical difference between *Identity* and *Pure Being* with which the entire *The Science of Logic* commences. Both are pure indeterminate immediacies, still not yet touched with the mediation that is about to ensue and bind them with other determinations. Thus, in that sense the identity is the totality of reflection and not merely its one determination, just like Pure Being is Being as such prior to any differentiation; “so far, then, identity is still in general the same as essence” (WL 412.1) or “the identity is, in the first instance, essence itself, not yet a determination of it, reflection in its entirety, not a distinct moment of it” (412.3). But there is also a fundamental difference between the opening determinations of the Doctrine of Being and *Identity*; as Hegel puts it, if the former merely “is,” the latter “has brought itself to unity.” Identity is essentially activity of self-relation: the “equality-with-self” that is continuously reconstituted, the reflection that “brings itself to unity.”

Clearly we are dealing here not with a property possessed by something in the world independently of any act of reflection, but with a key feature of any act of thinking that “brings itself to unity.” This dynamic nature of the first determination of reflection is what Hegel wants to bring to the fore when describing it as “pure movement of reflection” (416.2). The fact that Hegel does not take identity to be an “unmoved simple” property, but *an act of identification* becomes apparent with the example he offers to demonstrate that the identity implies difference.

Instead of being the unmoved simple, it surpasses itself  
into the dissolution of itself. More is entailed, therefore,

in the form of the proposition expressing identity than simple, abstract identity; entailed by it is this pure movement of reflection in the course of which there emerges the other, but only as reflective shine, as immediate disappearing; “A is” is a beginning that envisages a something different before it to which the “A is” would proceed; but the “A is” never gets to it. “A is...A”: the difference is only a disappearing and the movement goes back into itself. (WL 360.1-2)

The point is that identity as a form of reflection implies difference because it is not an “unmoved simple” property that is discerned within an object of thought, but an active principle of self-relation that in order to return to itself has to introduce difference, but only as “reflective shine.” Hence, Hegel’s determinations of reflection are not the most fundamental elements of actuality along the lines of the Aristotelian categories as the most universal characteristics of what is out there in the world. For the latter presupposed the representationalist picture of the universal features of the world expressed in the determination of thought as the categories. Instead, they are the necessary conditions that any process of reflection engaged in determination of content has to fulfill.

Identity is the dynamic principle of unification that is present in any action of thought, for even the other determinations that will be derived from it shortly by Hegel have to be parts of the unified whole in order to be comprehended as *difference, diversity*, etc. For only within a unified whole can difference be thought; if there is no act of relating one determination with another one as distinct from it and taking them up together into a self-identical act of reflection, differentiation cannot be accomplished. This is even clearer in the case of diversity, contradiction, etc. Hence, identity can be described as the minimal requirement of thought, the

principal element of any determination. As with Kant, here also we are dealing with carving out a self-identical domain of determination. In the former case, it was the identity of plurality of apprehended individuals in regard to the presence of certain schema of apprehension in all of them, hence the identical acts of unity that all of them have in common. In the latter case, we have the very same formal structure of act of identification presented in a more minimalistic vocabulary.

## 7) Difference

If *identity* is the moment of reflection that represents the continuous effort toward reconstitution of unity, *difference* is the negating force that reshapes existing determinations and generates new ones: “Difference is the negativity that reflection possesses in itself” (WL 361). In order to constitute unity, reflective activity has to integrate determinations within a whole, thus negating their apparent self-sufficiency and rendering them into the elements of an interrelated unified whole. Any process of negation, on the other hand, also implies a drive toward unification as what is negated is taken up within the process of reflection that includes other determinations. This mutual relatedness is one of the key features of difference and identity as the essential moments of any act of reflection: “Difference is the whole and its own moment, just as identity equally is its whole and its moment. – This is to be regarded as the essential nature of reflection and as the determined primordial origin of all activity and self-movement. – Both difference and identity make themselves into moment or positedness because, as reflection, they are negative

self-reference” (WL 362). Hence, the process of the generation of determinations of thought for Hegel, on the most fundamental level, is differentiation and identification. We shall see that this thesis will be restated in the *Concept* chapter of the *Subjective Logic* and specifically in regard to the universal moment of the concept that Hegel sees as “the creative power” that generates conceptual content.

Here again, just like with *identity*, Hegel is explicit in arguing that we should not confuse *difference* with a feature of the self-sufficient actuality. This is what he is after when juxtaposing and contrasting *difference* with *otherness*. The former is a feature of the process of reflection, while the latter that of determinate being.

It is the difference of reflection, not the otherness of existence. One existence and another existence are posited as lying outside each other; each of the two existences thus determined over against each other has an immediate being for itself. The other of essence, by contrast, is the other in and for itself, not the other of some other which is to be found outside it; it is simple determinateness in itself. Also in the sphere of existence did otherness and determinateness prove to be of this nature, simple determinateness, identical opposition; but this identity showed itself only as the transition of a determinateness into the other. Here, in the sphere of reflection, difference comes in as reflected, so posited as it is in itself. (WL 361)

*Difference* here is the negative moment of thought that deals not with some external, given determination, but instead is the basic negative function of the act of reflection. It therefore ought not to be confused with *otherness* of determinate being. The latter implies givenness of distinct determinations between which reflection can move back and forth. *Difference* on the other hand is the aspect of the process of reflection that generates empirical determinations and together with identity

constitutes the most fundamental functions on which the radical plasticity of empirical determinations rests. Hence, together with identity, difference is the basic function of determinateness; it is through these two forms, differentiation and identification, that carving out of the boundaries between determinations is accomplished. As in Kant, here as well identity and difference are the most basic functions through which determination is accomplished.

## **8) Diversity**

The subsequent determination of reflection is the unity of *identity* and *difference*, or the application of the latter on the former: “Identity internally breaks apart into diversity because, as absolute difference in itself, it posits itself as the negative of itself and these, its two moments (itself and the negative of itself), are reflections into themselves, are identical with themselves; or precisely because it itself immediately sublates its negating and is in its determination reflected into itself” (WL 362). Hence, the differentiated elements are “reflected into” themselves qua self-identical unities. Indeed, clearly, the minimal condition of any determination is some form of self-unity; and therefore the determinations that are generated through the “identity [that] internally breaks apart” is not merely differentiated determinations but also self-identical ones. And on the other hand, these determinations can be self-identical only through differentiating from what is not identical to them. Diversity is, as such, the first immediate result of the unity of identity and difference. At this stage we can see quite clearly the correspondence

with the Kantian concepts of reflection. In both cases, the determination of the domain or extension of diverse concepts is the task accomplished by identification and differentiation.

With the posited determinations in the picture, we no longer have the complete transparency of reflection that was there with *identity* and *difference*. The posited determinations stand outside of the complete self-transparency of reflection and its positive (identity) and negative (difference) moments: “Diversity constitutes the otherness as such of reflection” (WL 362). But this does not mean that diversity is a determination of being, something absolutely external to thought; it instead is the otherness of reflection generated from the process of reflection itself. “The other of existence has immediate being, where negativity resides, for its foundation. But in reflection it is self-identity, the reflected immediacy, that constitutes the subsistence of the negative and its indifference” (WL 362).

With the introduction of the diversity that is the internally posited differentiated content, *differentiation* and *identification* acquire new functions, namely, as determining *likeness* and *unlikeness* amongst the posited determinations; “this external identity is likeness, and external difference is unlikeness” (WL 363). What were the positive and the negative moments of activity of reflection in general are now functions relating the determinations that have been generated through it. *Identity* and *difference* operate within the diversified content as *likeness* and *unlikeness*. Just like in their pure form, however, they mutually implied each other; unlikeness can only be determined on the background of likeness and vice versa—

two determinations can be likened to each other as long as they are also unlike, or in some respect different from, each other. Without this difference they would simply not be two distinct determinations.

This last point brings us to the complex relation that Hegel stands to Leibniz's theory of identity of indiscernibles. On the face of it, he sides with Leibniz and goes against Kant when stating that numerical distinctness implies difference in determinations of thought, hence not on the level of sensible given but on the level of conceptual content.

That everything is different from everything else is an altogether superfluous proposition, for in the plural of things there is already implied a multitude and totally indeterminate diversity. – The principle, however, “There are no two perfectly like things,” expresses more than that, for it expresses determinate difference. Two things are not merely two (numerical multiplicity is only the repetition of one) but are rather differentiated by a determination. (WL 366)

Hence, the necessary condition for distinctness, according to Hegel, is determinate difference. Hegel indeed agrees with Leibniz that all difference is reducible to conceptual difference, and there are hence no other conditions (such as sensible, as Kant would have it) that could serve as the ground of numerical distinctness. But on the other hand, Hegel also sides with Kant against Leibniz in his rejection of the conception of cognition as a mere perception of content. The world is given to it in the form of ideas that are preprogrammed to arise in it as perceptions. “The Leibnizian monad develops its representations from itself but is not their generating and controlling force; they rise up in it as a froth, indifferent, immediately present to



each other and to the monad as well" (WL 343). For Hegel, then, what is lacking in Leibniz is the process of mediation, the activity of generation of the conceptual content; the Leibnizian ideas, instead of being products of reflection, merely pop up in the mind like bubbles. Kant, on the other hand, introduces the role of active reflection as the source of the generation of determinations. The problem with his stance, according to Hegel, is in setting limits to the active reflection as the source of determinations and retaining the passive reception of sensations as another source of determinations. Therefore, ultimately the problem with Kant, according to Hegel, is that he retains too much of Leibniz by allowing immediately received content as the ground of differentiation between entities. That is, Kant has rejected the Leibnizian immediacy or determinate content by placing spontaneity as the source of generation of the conceptual content, but he does not go far enough for Hegel to completely eliminate the passive reception content as the immediately given source of determinations.

## 9) Opposition

Hegel introduces *opposition* as "the determinate reflection" in which *difference* "finds its completion." If with *diversity*, determinations produced through the process of reflection were related to one another and therefore the question of their groundedness on the activity of thought was set aside, here it occupies the center stage of the discussion. The determinations that are related as *opposite* to one another are here taken as elements of "the one mediation of the opposition as such,

in which they are simply only posited moments” (WL 425.3). Hence, instead of likeness and unlikeness as the modalities of relating diverse determinations, now we are attending to the unified process of mediation thought, which distinct determinations as such are posited. From a perspective that looks at diversity of determinations as if from an external point of view, we transition to the one that approaches the generation of these determinations, having been accomplished through the process of reflection, that *opposes* them to one another. In other words, the generation of determinate conceptual content on the most fundamental level involves the identification and differentiation of the pairs of determinations that are opposed to one another. One element of the pair is *positive*, the other *negative*, but at the same time each side can be either *positive* or *negative*.

The two sides are thus merely diverse, and because their determinateness – that they are positive or negative – constitutes their positedness as against each other, each is not specifically so determined internally but is only determinateness in general; to each side, therefore, there belongs indeed one of the two determinacies, the positive or the negative; but the two can be interchanged, and each side is such as can be taken equally as positive or negative. (WL 369)

Negative and positive are the simultaneously posited sides of the act of the generation of mutually opposing determinations, and neither side is intrinsically positive or negative. They are the basic functions of the process of differentiation, and this is why Hegel claimed that opposition is the completion of difference.

## 10) Contradiction

Given the foregoing, the process of reflection that generates conceptual content proceeds with positing a determination and in the same breath excluding its otherness. Not only is the *diversity* of determinations generated through this process of reflection, but the determinations as *opposing* one another are determined through negation of the other, and as such they are only through one another or constituted through reciprocal opposition. But having laid out these basic functions involved in the formation of conceptual content, we can also discern one more formal relation that is necessarily involved within the process that is guided with this constellation of functions. This formal function is *contradiction*.

Each act of determination has two necessary aspects that correspond to the two main functions from the determinations of reflection, identity, and difference. The first aspect is that it is self-identical, and the second, that it is what it is through differentiation from what it is not. The former can be seen as the positive, and the latter as the negative moment of the determination. When closely analyzed, however, each one of the sides will lead to necessary transition into their opposites (433.3).

The positive is contradiction – in that, as the positing of self-identity by the excluding of the negative, it makes itself into a negative, hence into the other which it excludes from itself. This last, as excluded, is posited free of the one that excludes; hence, as reflected into itself and itself as excluding. The reflection that excludes is thus the positing of the positive as excluding the other, so that this positing immediately is the positing of its other which excludes it. (WL 375)

The claim that Hegel is making here is that any act of positive determinations is also an immediate determination of what it excludes, thus of the negative. The positing of a determination is possible only through the exclusion of what does not belong to it, hence simultaneously determining what is excluded. Thus the act of positing a determination is always at the same time the act of determining what is excluded from it. Therefore, when we are dealing with a complex system of interrelated determinations, the generation of any new determination is not merely related to the specifically posited content but at the same time with the totality that is excluded from it.

This is only one side of what Hegel calls “absolute contradiction,” its positive aspect. In addition to this, it also has the negative component: contradiction discerned from the opposite side of the act of determination, or “the absolute contradiction of the negative” (WL 432). At first, the very same schema as we have seen from the positive side—the determination as simultaneously posited (thus reflected) in what it excludes—can be discerned: “Considered in itself as against the positive, the negative is positedness as reflected into unlikeness to itself, the negative as negative” (WL 375). But in this case, we have an additional aspect that needs to be factored in, namely, that we are dealing not with positive but *negative* determination, which immediately implies the negation of the opposite: “But the negative is itself the unlike, the non-being of another; consequently, reflection is in its unlikeness its reference rather to itself” (WL 375). Hence, the relation that we had to explicate in the case of the positive, which is still there and can be explicated in the negative, is in addition to that which is also immediately present on this side

of determination. This is what Hegel is claiming in this passage, “This is therefore the same contradiction which the positive is, namely positedness or negation as self-reference. But the positive is only implicitly this contradiction, is contradiction only in itself; the negative, on the contrary, is the posited contradiction” (WL 375).

Having delineated the basic relational structure involved in any act of determination, we can conclude that the contradiction is the relational function immanent to the process of the generation of conceptual content and that it emerges from the opposition between the positive and the negative moments of any act of determination. Hence, contradiction is the element ingrained in the relational structure that is necessarily present with any process of generation of determinate content. It is the tension between seeming self-subsistence of what is posited and its constitutedness by the system of relations that are left external to it.

My analysis of Hegel's *essentialities* or the *determinations of reflection* that was carried out in this chapter on the background of the Kantian concepts of comparison aimed at shedding light on the role they play in the generation of empirical determinations. These basic functions of unity are the forms of relating determinations to one another through which the formation of empirical concepts takes place. Our investigation into the details of how the functions identical to the Hegelian essentialities are operating in the generation of empirical determinations within the Kantian system has shed light on the functioning of essentialities in the empirical concept generating process. As it has also been apparent, the analysis undertaken in this chapter should be understood as a detailed exploration within

the immanent structure of the universal moment of the *concept*—the moment that Hegel associates with the generation of conceptual content. The two remaining chapters will be dedicated to a close analysis of this fundamental ontological structure of Hegel's ontology—his theory of the *concept*.

## CHAPTER 4: The Logical Structure of the Concept

### 1) The Concept as the Centerpiece of Hegel's Transcendental Ontology

In the previous chapter, I presented a detailed account of Hegel's vision of the process of generating conceptual content and the meta-concepts that function as the basic forms that carry it out. I argued that the determinations of reflection presented by Hegel in the Doctrine of Essence were the normative authority-conferring basic schemata, through the application of which empirical concepts and their determinate content were generated. It has also become apparent that these basic determinations of reflection can be traced back to the Kantian logical functions of judgment, which on their part were also basic forms of the activity of the mind through which both empirical and a priori concepts were generated. This Kantian thread, however, does not end there on the level of the Doctrine of Essence—as we shall see, it weaves its way all the way to the foundations of the Hegelian system. If the determinations of reflection are the results of Hegel's appropriation of the Kantian logical functions of judgment, the Doctrine of the Concept can be seen as an extended commentary on the central thesis of Kant's transcendental deduction: “object is that in *the concept* of which manifold is united”

The animating idea of Hegel's *Logic*, and thus the central thesis of his transcendental ontology, is that reality properly comprehended is *the concept*—“the

cognition that truly comprehends the object is the cognition of it as it is *in and for itself*, and that *the Concept is its very objectivity*" (WL 590.2) The present and the following chapters will be dedicated to the task of spelling out what exactly Hegel means by the term *concept*, what the assumptions and implications are of such a conception of reality, and where this thesis positions Hegel in relation to alternative ontological theories. As we shall see, what Hegel means by the *concept* is very different from the ordinary understanding of the term as a certain kind of mental representations or abstract universals that refer to the things in the mind-external world. The more deeply we descend in analyzing his theory of the concept, the more apparent it shall become that what Hegel is doing in this crucial part of the *Logic* is laying the ground for a fundamentally new ontological vision that directly emerges from the Kantian transcendental philosophy, putting behind many deeply rooted (and still often encountered) dogmas of the hitherto dominant tradition.

The term *concept* for Hegel stands for a complex ontological structure that consists of three elements (or, in his words, *moments*), as well as the schema of relations between them. This separation into relations and relata, however, is somewhat artificial, as the moments of the concept and the schemata of mediation between them are mutually dependent and can be adequately grasped only in unison. Hence, merely dissecting the concept into its components is not going to give us a comprehensive account of what the concept means. It is also crucial to describe the way in which the moments of the concept are related to one another. The detailed analysis of the nature of the three moments of the concept and the schema of their relation is presented by Hegel in the first section of *The Doctrine of the*



*Concept*, specifically in its first and third chapters, *The Concept* and *The Syllogism*. While *The Concept* chapter focuses on the moments, *The Syllogism* presents several different schemas of mediation between them. These schemas, which constitute different ontological models as I shall show shortly, are arranged in an ascending degree of proximity to the Hegelian vision of actuality that on the one hand serves as the final element of this set, and on the other presents the fully mediated structure of the concept.

Hegel describes the relation between the concept and the syllogism in the following words: “the syllogism is the completely posited Concept” (WL 664) and “in the syllogism ... their [moments of the concept] determinate *unity* is posited” (WL 664). The technical term *posited* for Hegel implies “made explicit” or “manifest”; therefore, the development from the *Concept* chapter to the *Syllogism* chapter is a process of self-manifestation of the concept. Although it is only at the end of this process that the successful model of the unified inner structure of the concept will emerge, it is still of crucial importance to closely examine the entire development, because an adequate understanding of each new stage of mediation assumes familiarity with what has previously taken place. The three moments of the concept—*universality*, *particularity*, and *individuality*—undergo significant transformation as they traverse the stages of mediation via syllogistic structures, at each stage leaving its footprint in the moments of the concept. As we shall see, by the end of Hegel’s *Syllogism* chapter, all three terms will have acquired meaning quite different from what they had at its beginning.

While examining the details of the development in *the Doctrine of the Concept*, it is important to keep in mind its significant difference from what has been covered in the previous parts of the *Logic*: “The progression of the Concept is no longer either passing-over or shining into another, but *development*; for the [moments] that are distinguished are immediately posited at the same time as identical with one another and with the whole , and [each] determinacy is as a free being of the whole Concept” (EL, par 161, pg 237). Hence, if prior to this point in the text, the development involved changing of the subject-matter, or as Hegel puts it, “passing-over” from one area within the onto-logical space to another, in the *Doctrine of the Concept* the different stages of development are “posited ... as identical with one another” The last form of syllogistic mediation is describing the very same actuality as the first one but more adequately comprehended. Thus, what Hegel calls “development” is a gradual deepening of understanding of the logical structure of the concept; every new form of mediation between its elements is a more adequate depiction of their fundamental unity. The third part of the *Logic* therefore can be described as an account of the epigenesis of the Hegelian Concept—the centerpiece of his transcendental ontological system.

### **1.1) The Kantian Origins**

Hegel’s *Doctrine of the Concept* is the most direct testimony of the Kantian origins of his system. It draws on the task undertaken in the *Doctrine of Essence*, where the basic functions employed in the empirical concept generating activity, which includes reflection as a form of activity but is not limited to it, as it also

includes non-mental activity—or, rather, rejects the distinction between the two as a part of overall paradigm shift that leaves behind the dualistic ontology altogether. The *Doctrine of the Concept* also presents an account of the relational structure that includes this empirical concept generating activity together with the determinations that it produces as the integral parts of the larger whole, which Hegel calls *actuality*. In other words, if the determinations of reflection are meta-concepts that exhibit the functions guiding the process of generating empirical concepts, the subject matter of the doctrine of the concept can be described as the meta-meta-concept that presents the architectonics of the relation between the concept-generating process, the totality of empirical concepts, and actuality.

#### **1.1.1) Self-Relationality**

As we shall see, amongst several other crucial similarities with Kant, one of the defining features of Hegel's basic ontological structure is its *self-relationality*, which is a clear evidence of its Kantian origins. One advantage of my treatment of the much-contested issue of the Kant-Hegel relation is that it located the central thesis of Kant's transcendental idealism in the very heart of Hegel's ontology—his theory of the concept. This brings to light the limitations of the alternative approaches on the issue. For example, it shall become clear that Brady Bowman's reading of the self-relational structure of the Hegelian ontology that focuses on the doctrine of essence clearly cannot do justice to the issue under consideration, because neither is the doctrine of essence where the most fundamental layer of Hegel's transcendental ontology is presented, nor is it the deepest point in the text where the self-relational structure can be discerned. In fact, this mistake might be

the key reason for Bowman's and Robert Stern's misreading of Hegel as abandoning the Kantian project—they did not deny the presence of the Kantian influence on Hegel, but their lack of the appreciation of the all-pervasiveness of this influence led them to their mistaken conclusions. Indeed, if the self-relationality is the central characteristic of Hegel's transcendental ontology, it has to be—and as the analysis to follow shall make clear, it indeed is—present at the epicenter of the system, i.e., the theory of the concept.

While the first two parts of the *Logic*, the *Doctrine of Being* and the *Doctrine of Essence*, are concerned with the traditional categories (although as the earlier chapters have demonstrated, they are integrated into the overall paradigm shift that is taking place in the transition from the traditional to the Hegelian ontology), the third part, the *Doctrine of the Concept*, is where Hegel breaks new ground and the extent of his departure from the tradition comes to the fore. The project of substituting traditional ontology with the transcendental logic initiated by Kant attains its completion in this last part of Hegel's *Logic*. The basic relational schemata that makes up the structure of the *Concept* is of both logical and of onto-logical import on which rests the correspondence between the laws of logic and the structure of reality.

Instead of merely presupposing or postulating this correspondence like in Plato, traditional metaphysics, or early Russell, Hegel gives a detailed account of their unity. The mysterious claim of the tradition about the acquaintance of the mind through the determinations of thought, the laws of logic, with the

determinations of the world is substituted by a complex but powerful argument that takes its inspiration from Kant's revolutionary insight. The *Concept* is the systematic structure of the basic conditions on which both the determination of *being* and *thought* are grounded: "Being and Essence are so far the moments of its [the Concept's] becoming; but it is their foundation and truth as the identity in which they are submerged and contained" (WL 577). For Hegel, the inadequacy of the categories of traditional ontology and logic lies not in their complete lack of the capacity to grasp reality, but in that they can neither do this on the most fundamental level, nor explain what their confidence in the accessibility of reality rests on. Instead of having comprehended the basic elements or the conditions, they remain on the surface level of the conditioned. In fact, had the tradition understood the nature of the grounding of its basic ontological categories, it would have been in the position to meet Hegel's challenge presented in Chapter 2—namely, how traditional metaphysics justifies the applicability of the categories to reality. This is essentially the question that triggered Kant's Copernican revolution, and as Hegel sees it, it is adequately answered only in his ontological theory and more specifically, in the theory of the concept. It is only when the categories are grounded on the very same fundamental structure that also underlies the reality properly understood can one legitimize their application.

## **1.2) Acknowledgment of the Kantian Origins**

Hegel begins the *Doctrine of the Concept* with a lengthy introductory discussion that aims to orient the reader to how much has been covered and what

still remains to be done in order to arrive at his fully fledged philosophical vision. The fact that most of this introductory discussion is dedicated to the analysis of Kant reveals much about the position Hegel is setting the stage to articulate. Moreover, even a cursory look at these pages makes evident that the central part of Hegel's ontological theory, which he is preparing his reader for, directly emerges from the Kantian transcendental philosophy. For example, the thesis of the concept being the underlying ground of actuality is explicitly acknowledged to originate from Kant, who, according to Hegel, described "the object as that in which the manifold of intuition is unified.... Here... the objectivity of thought is specifically enunciated, an identity of *Concept* and thing, which is truth" (WL 590). Thus, Hegel begins the presentation of the theory of the concept as the ground of actuality with the extensive analysis of the Kantian original insight about the concept underlying and conditioning empirical objects. Even if there were no more deeply running currents that tie these two projects together, this open declaration of the Kantian origins of the crucial element of his project right from the outset of the discussion of this element is conclusive evidence of how much Hegel is tracing Kant's footsteps in what is to follow. But as will be made clear later in this Chapter, this is only the tip of the iceberg of both acknowledged and unacknowledged convergences between these two outlooks.

The introductory remarks to the *Doctrine of the Concept* demonstrate Hegel's recognition of Kant as the transitional figure from traditional metaphysics to his own position. Hegel begins with introducing the *concept* as the underlying truth of the determinations of Being and Essence and by maintaining that the *concept* is the

truth of the *substance* as “the real *essence*” (WL 577). Hence, the subject matter of the last part of the *Logic*, the theory of the *concept*, is the same as the preceding parts but grasped on a more fundamental level. Hegel sees both of these perspectives—the outlook that grasps reality on the level of the substance and the one that inaugurates the perspective that sees reality as grounded on the concept—as actualized in the history of philosophy, proclaiming that “The philosophy which adopts the standpoint of substance and stops there is the system of Spinoza” (580). After dwelling for a while on the strengths and weaknesses of Spinoza’s position, Hegel moves onto a much lengthier analysis of Kant’s doctrine, associating it with the theme of the *concept* as the ground of reality: “It is one of the profoundest and truest insights to be found in the *Critique of Pure Reason* that the unity which constitutes the nature of the Concept is recognized as the original synthetic unity of apperception, as unity of the I think, or of self-consciousness” (WL 584). He further adds that this insight “goes beyond the mere representation of the relation in which ... concept stands to a thing and its properties and accidents and advances to the thoughts of that relation” (WL 584).

It is clear that in Hegel’s eye, the *Logic* can be divided roughly into two parts: firstly, the one that expresses the standpoint that precedes Kant (clearly not in merely temporal sense of the term), the traditional metaphysics, and secondly the other part that is post-Kantian in spirit through and through, i.e., his own philosophical system. In this, Kant is the watershed figure setting apart the two sides—the traditional metaphysics, which he brings to the end, and the Hegelian transcendental ontology for which Hegel furnishes the grounds. The Kantian origins

of Hegel's project are made manifest by the structure of his *Logic* and the way Hegel understands the correspondence of its different parts to the central figures in the history of philosophy. Hence, one can say that Hegel's Kantianism is built into the structure of his *Logic*.

## **2) Hegel's Kantianism and Stern's Position**

The interpretations of Hegel that place him within the tradition of pre-critical metaphysics tend to focus on the *objective* logic and pay little attention to the theory of the concept. But Hegel is explicit about the centrality of the *subjective* logic for his ontology, as is evident in his claim that "the concept is the truth of substance" (WL 577) and many other similar ones. Moreover, that Hegel is discussing the traditional categories in the *objective* logic and does not shy away from the vocabulary associated with the pre-critical metaphysics is not reason enough for us to ignore the new meanings he gives to these terms and to relegate him to the tradition that he described as naïve and the overcoming of which he saw as the central task of his philosophy.

The strongest defense of the metaphysical reading of Hegel is perhaps Stern's. Its advantage over other similar interpretations is that rather than turning a blind eye to the Kantian dimension of Hegel's system, which would have rendered his reading simply implausible, Stern explicitly acknowledges it. But having done that, Stern still maintains that Hegelian philosophy belongs to the category of the pre-critical metaphysical systems. Stern believes Hegel found the Kantian system wanting, "while Kant recognized that thought was required in order to grasp the



world as more than the ‘fleeting and transient’ objects of experience, he did not accept that this thought gave us access to the world as such” (Stern, 2009, 73). Stern concludes that, although Hegel had appropriated some Kantian insights, he came to recognize Kant’s limitations and acknowledged the superiority of traditional metaphysics over transcendental philosophy,

Hegel would claim that in finding something in the classical tradition that still needs to be taken seriously, he was building on the real lesson to be learned from Kant (even if it was not learned by Kant himself). This is that there can be no workable distinction between “immediate” experience and “mediated” thought, as conceptualization runs through all cognitive relevant levels, making it impossible for the empiricist to question our faith in thinking without ending up in total skepticism. (Stern 2009, 74)

Hence, Stern emphasizes Hegel’s disappointment with the Kantian retention of the thing-in-itself as a part of his system, while the crucial lesson learned from him was the necessarily mediated nature of all experience.

## **2.1) Thing-in-itself criticism**

While both of the points emphasized by Stern are correct, using them as the thread that connects Hegel with Kant is misleading. Hegel never tires of criticizing the Kantian thing-in-itself; however, this is a sign of not the gap between the two but the deeply running continuity between them—only on the basis of the shared background that the refutation of one of the elements of Kant’s system could have become such a pressing issue for Hegel. At the same time, it is important to note that thing-in-itself is a peripheral aspect of Kant’s theoretical philosophy, and the main

motivation for Kant to keep it in his system was specific to his practical philosophy and related to the need of carving out the conceptual space free of the cause-effect relational schema in which the self-determining free subjectivity could be articulated. Hegel is very well aware of this motive of Kant, and this is the very reason that, together with rejecting the thing-in-itself, he explicitly upheld Kant's theoretical philosophy over the practical one.

Moreover, thing-in-itself is clearly a remnant of the old metaphysical systems as it postulated a being radically external to thought. Hence, when Hegel considers this to be the weakest aspect of Kant's philosophy and attacks it, he is criticizing not Kant's original insight, i.e., his transcendental turn, but the remnants of the traditional metaphysics still lingering in his system. As such, if notwithstanding the whole array of deeply running themes of continuity between the two philosophers, one still decides to look at the Kant-Hegel relation through the lens of the latter's criticism of the thing-in-itself, then at least one has to go beyond the surface level and uncover the real motivations of the criticism. Had Stern done that, he would have seen that the ultimate force behind this specific criticism is not the difference but the shared background between the two, and this could have helped him draw a more precise picture of what exactly is common between Kant and Hegel and where their paths diverge.

## **2.2) The Similarity Stern Focuses on**

"The real lesson" that Hegel learned from Kant, according to Stern, is that "there can be no workable distinction between 'immediate' experience and

‘mediated’ thought, as conceptualization runs through all cognitive relevant levels” (Stern 2009, 74), maintaining that this ought to be seen as the main thread connecting the two systems. There being no immanent boundary for conceptualization for both Kant and Hegel is certainly a correct as well as an important observation, but the problem is that Stern focuses exclusively on this point and disregards the other equally significant (and perhaps even more so) points of convergence between the Kantian critical system and the Hegelian transcendental ontology.

The peculiarity of this point of connection that sets it apart from the others is that Hegel completely assimilates this Kantian insight into his system at an early stage in the presentation of his system, in the *Doctrine of Essence*. As I have shown in Chapter 3, in this middle part of the *Logic*, Hegel argues that determinations of reflection are the basic functions that need to be involved in the process of generating of any content, cutting across the conceptual vs. sensible divide. Hence, in this specific case, the question of continuity between the Kantian and the Hegelian stances is resolved prior to entering the fundamental layer of the Hegelian transcendental ontology: the doctrine of the concept. Mediatedness of both sensible and conceptual manifold is the task carried out by the process of reflection that Hegel looks at in the *Doctrine of Essence*, the part of the *Logic* that has not left the themes and concerns of traditional metaphysics fully behind. In fact, as I have shown, at that point in the text we stand at the very epicenter of integrating the Kantian Copernican turn within Hegel’s system, and until this is brought to completion and its implications are properly fleshed out (which will take place in

the subjective logic), we cannot appreciate the extent of Hegel's departure from the tradition. Thus, the specific similarity between the Kantian and the Hegelian systems that Stern decides to focus on cannot do justice to how far-reaching Hegel's rejection of the traditional metaphysics is.

### **2.3) Unacknowledged Similarities**

Perhaps the most important shortcoming of Stern's reading is its failure to acknowledge explicitly what constitutes the most fundamental link between the two systems—the thesis that the *concept* conditions actuality. Stern wants to describe Kant's project as primarily epistemological, concerned with the structure of *appearances* rather than of *being*; hence, if the concept grounds anything, it concerns with not how things are but how they appear. He writes, "Kant may therefore be seen as proposing a dilemma to the traditional ontologist: Either he can proceed by abstracting from the spatio-temporal appearances of things in an attempt to speculate about things as they are in themselves...; or he ... must accept that he is no longer inquiring into being qua being" (Stern 2009, 15).

As I have already mentioned and as the forthcoming discussion shall demonstrate, the entire *Doctrine of the Concept* can be read as an extended analysis of this central thesis of Kant's transcendental deduction. Hegel makes no secret of his indebtedness to Kant on what is to follow in the theory of the concept. In the opening passages of the subjective logic, after having introduced the concept as the "substance raised to freedom" and having briefly outlined the three moments of its

immanent structure (universality, particularity, and individuality), Hegel directly associates the concept with the “I,” or pure self-consciousness: “the concept, when developed into a concrete existence that is itself free, is none other than the I or pure self-consciousness” (WL 583). Moreover, as if this was not enough as an open declaration of his indebtedness to Kant, Hegel continues with a lengthy summary of the argument of transcendental deduction (WL 584-85) and concludes it with the following statement: “thus we are justified by a cardinal principle of the Kantian philosophy in referring to the nature of the I in order to learn what the concept is” (WL 585). Such an introduction of the centerpiece of his ontological theory—the concept—and directly drawing on its structural identities with the transcendental apperception leave no doubt about the origins of the defining characteristics of this pivotal element of Hegel’s system.

## **2.4) The Kantian Origins of the Notion of the Concept as Relational Schema**

Another important theme binding Hegel to Kant that is brought to the fore in the introduction to the subjective logic is the rejection of the notion that the concept is an abstract universal and its replacement with a theory of the concept as a relational schema. While criticizing the tradition for working with a fundamentally flawed understanding of the concept, Hegel argues that “the superficial conception of what the Concept is, leaves all manifoldness outside the concept and attributes to the latter only the forms of abstract universality or the empty identity of

reflection.... If one would but reflect attentively on the meaning of this fact, one would see that differentiation must be regarded as an equally essential moment of the Concept” (WL 589). Differentiation for Hegel means the generation of determinations or formation of conceptual content. That is, for Hegel the concept is not merely an abstract universal, or the determination of the mind that is externally related to all manifold; instead, the concept is immanent to the manifold and possesses the capacity for differentiation that is positing a content of its own. One of the central tasks of the chapter that Hegel is introducing here will be the presentation of the account of this self-differentiation of the concept and examination of different models of relation between this process of self-differentiation, the products of this process and the manifold that it is declared to be immanent to in the passage just cited.

Immediately after voicing his criticism of the traditional notion of the concept and offering his alternative to it, Hegel points out the sources he is drawing on in taking this step. The just cited passage continues, “Kant has introduced this consideration by the extremely important thought that there are synthetic judgments a priori. This original synthesis of apperception is one of the most profound principles for speculative development; it contains the beginning of a true apprehension of the nature of the Concept” (WL 589). In other words, the self-differentiation of the concept that is one of the central themes of the third part of the *Logic* is traced back to the Kantian insight about the synthetic a priori judgments. This claim has several important implications for us. First, it brings forth the deeply running Kantian current of Hegel’s transcendental ontology to its very epicenter. As

the central element of the theory of the concept, its generation of the conceptual content is explicitly acknowledged to originate from Kant's "most profound principles." Secondly, it helps us see clearly the role of the determinations of reflection, which were demonstrated to be the Hegelian adaptation of Kant's logical functions of judgment, in the overall architectonics laid out in the theory of the concept. By the explicit association of the "nature of the concept"—and specifically its "self-differentiating" or content-generating aspect—with the "synthetic judgments a priori," Hegel is indicating that the determinations of reflection are the elementary functions that guide the process of self-differentiation of the concept, which, as we shall see shortly, is identified by Hegel with one of the three moments of the concept: the basics element of his transcendental ontology.

Hegel sees his theory of the concept as the ultimate grounds from which his alternative to the abstract formality of traditional logic emerges, "the abstract view that logic is only formal and, in fact, abstract from all content; we then have a one-sided cognition which is not to contain any object, an empty blank form which therefore is no more an agreement—for an agreement requires essentially two terms—than it is truth" (WL 594.1). The gap between the form and content, the abstract universals and the determinateness, renders traditional logic an inadequate medium for accessing reality as it operates exclusively on one side of the bifurcated ontological background structure. If the form of logical relations can be articulated in complete abstraction from the content, no matter whether logic is understood as the thought's form or that of the world's form, it can give us no substantial knowledge of reality. Hegel claims that this ontological and epistemological gap can

be bridged by rejecting the traditional conception of logic as merely formal and advancing an alternative to it within which the form is inseparable from content. But if a conception of logic is put forth that is no longer merely formal and generates content of its own, thereby positing determinations that have the same degree of normative authority as the principles of logic themselves, then we end up with a conception of logic that is radically transformed. This, no longer merely logic, opens up the possibility of a new conception of logic that encapsulates its own ontological commitments.

In light of this, advancing an alternative to the traditional conception of logic is one possible way to interpret Hegel's entire philosophical undertaking. And here again we encounter an explicit acknowledgment of the Kantian influence. Hegel is pointing to the Kantian transcendental logic as the point of origin of his own project: "In the a priori synthesis of the concept, Kant possesses a higher principle in which a duality in a unity could be cognized" (WL 594). But even without this explicit acknowledgement, it would be clear that the idea of logic as not merely formal ought to come from the Kantian distinction between general logic "abstracts from all content of cognition" (A55/B79) vs. transcendental logic, "the science of pure understanding and of the pure cognition of reason, by means of which we think objects completely a priori" (A57/B81). It is there that the seed was planted of cognizing something not merely formal about objective actuality based on the merely formal principles of logic. In Hegel's hand, the a priori act of synthesis will become a process or activity through which determinate conceptual content is generated and a detailed account will be given of the basic forms guiding this



process, as well as the architectonics of the systematic whole that is generated for it. But the basic method applied in both cases is identical—the bifurcation is overcome based on tracing the role of the formal principle of logic in the generation of determinations that immanently structure reality. The “*unity of duality*” mentioned in the above-cited passage is accomplished by Hegel within the structure of the concept and in terms of the relation between its universal and particular moments. The schemata of relation between the moments of the concept that are presented in the *Syllogism* section of the *Logic* are different models through which the mediation between the abstract and the concrete sides of the formally bifurcated ontological model can be established.

Hegel’s transcendental ontology arises out of the potential immanent to the Kantian transcendental logic. Once the thesis of the possibility of cognition of the specific determinations of reality based on the principles of logic is in the picture, and a system of such a priori determinations is put forth, also opened up is a whole new horizon of drawing further conclusions about the overall structure of such reality and enriching this a priori content. Hegel takes up this very task, and in addition to enriching the system of a priori determinations, he adds a whole new dimension to the Kantian project—namely, he asks what conclusions can be drawn about the totality of conceptual content, the process of its generation and their interrelation, as well as the relation to empirical reality, granted that we accept the Kantian story of the possibility of synthetic a priori cognition. This meta-account is the task taken up in the theory of the concept. Universality, particularity, and individuality are the three elements that make up the moments of this meta-

structure, and their analysis will allow Hegel to explore not only the question of what are the a priori determinations through which actuality is mediated to us (this was done in the previous parts of the *Logic*), but on a higher level what are the structural features of the world within which the generation of empirical conceptual content is carried out through the application of the given set of a priori functions.

#### **2.4.1) An Example of Ontological Assumptions**

In order to prepare his readers for the upcoming task, Hegel considers a case of ordinary assertoric proposition and points out the presence of implicit ontological assumptions therein. The claim is that when we make assertions of the kind "*the individual is a universal*," we are implicitly presupposing certain formal schema being present in and immanently structuring reality.

Thus, for example, the form of the positive judgment is accepted as something perfectly correct in itself, the question whether such a judgment is true depending on the content. Whether this form is in its own self a form of truth, whether the proposition it enunciates, the individual is a universal, is not inherently dialectical, is a question that no one thinks of investigating. (WL 594)

Here Hegel makes clear what he is after. He criticizes traditional ontology for overlooking its most essential task, and for simply importing the basic determinations of reality from external sources like language instead of critically examining them. The tradition simply assumes that the relational schema expressed in the judgment "the individual is universal" is also to be found within reality as its immanent structure. Therefore, the only question for the tradition that remains to

be dealt with is whether the specific content that is placed in this form does justice to reality.

But what if the schematic structure of reality is such that the given form cannot do justice to it?—asks Hegel. He argues that the Kantian insight about the possibility of synthetic a priori cognition gives us a powerful principle through which we can carry out a critical investigation of the formal architectonic structure of actuality. This is the task taken up by him in the *Doctrine of the Concept*, where he looks at the different schemas of relation between the universal, particular, and individual moments of the concept, and therefore of the world. But this enquiry into the onto-logical structure of actuality is a further development of the Kantian distinction between the general (or formal) and transcendental logic. The lengthy analysis of Kant and criticism of the merely formal nature of traditional logic with which Hegel introduces his theory of the concept is a clear testimony that we are standing not at the threshold of an ontological theory of a traditional kind, but of the transcendental ontology the conditions of the possibility of which lie in Kant's transcendental logic.

## **2.5) Hegel's criticism of "Kant"**

Perhaps the most interesting evidence of the deeply running continuity between the two projects is Hegel's criticism of Kant. A close investigation of what appears on the surface as Hegel's attack will reveal that the genuine Kantian stance is expressed not by the position that is being criticized but by the one from which

this criticism is voiced. Thus, when Hegel attacks Kant on siding with empiricism on the issue of reality being composed of the manifold of intuitions as the empirical material from which universals are to be abstracted, he is clearly attacking not Kant but a possible (and unfortunately widespread) misinterpretation of Kant's position. Hegel writes,

The conception of this relation both in ordinary psychology and in the Kantian transcendental philosophy is that the empirical material, the manifold of intuitions and representations, first exists on its own account, and that then the understanding approaches it, brings unity into it and by abstraction raises it to the form of universality .... The concept is not the independent factor, not the essential and true element of the prior given material; on the contrary, it is the material that is regarded as the absolute reality, which cannot be extracted from the Concept. (WL 587)

As was shown in Chapter 3, Kant's stance is very far from the position sketched and criticized here by Hegel. He attacks a variation of the view that is often mistakenly attributed to Kant, which maintains that two elements are needed for cognition to take place. The first is the sensible input supplied to the mind by external reality, and the second is the forms of synthesis as that can ultimately be traced to the cognitive constitution of the mind.

If this were really Kant's position, the criticism would have been fair. But Kant actually stands much closer to the position from which Hegel's criticism is voiced than to the one that is being criticized. The point of Hegel's criticism is that the concept should be acknowledged as the "the essential and true element of the prior given material" instead of postulating the sensible material as "the absolute

reality.” And indeed, for Kant also the concept is the rule-guided act of synthesis within which the logical functions of judgment have been ingrained, thereby constituting the grounds for actuality—or the “essential and true element.” Sensation, on the other hand and contrary to the above-presented misinterpretation of Kant’s position, is a mere subtype of representation, the “inner determination of the mind,” which has no objective reference. Hence, what is presented as a criticism of Kant would have been better described as an attempt to defend Kant from his “followers” who radically misinterpret his position.

## **2.6) Hegel Closer to Aristotle than to Kant?**

By now, it should be clear that Stern’s positioning of Hegel closer to Aristotle than to Kant arises out of a highly selective reading that fails to do justice to both Hegel and Kant. Stern claims, “Hegel is closer to Aristotle than Kant in conducting his inquiry ontologically, as a *metaphysica generalis*, for which ‘the categories analyzed in the *Logic* are all forms or ways of being ... they are not merely concepts in terms of which we have to understand what is’” (Stern 2009, 50). Here again, Stern correctly describes Hegel’s position that *categories are not merely concepts but also forms of being*, but this is one of those correct assertions that completely miss the point. Stern’s thesis fails to represent the root of the matter from its lack of appreciation of the fact that Hegel’s claim of the identity of concept and being is not a bare assumption but an outcome of his entire undertaking in the *Logic*. Moreover,

Hegel speaks of arriving at this result from his lifelong effort to find the solution to the problem first clearly identified by Kant, in his famous letter to Herz:

What is the ground of the relation of that in us which we call 'representation' to the object? ... the pure concepts of the understanding must not be abstracted from sense perceptions, nor must they express the reception of representations through the senses; but though they must have their origin in the nature of the soul, they are neither caused by the object nor do they bring the object itself into being. In my dissertation I was content to explain the nature of intellectual representations in a merely negative way, namely, to state that they were not modifications of the soul brought about by the object. However, I silently passed over the further question of how a representation that refers to an object without being in any way affected by it can be possible. (KCR 10:130 )

In Hegel's eye, a preliminary solution to the problem was offered (although not a satisfactory one) by Kant himself. With traditional metaphysics and Aristotle, we are dealing not only with the absence of addressing the issue, as it had not even been posed as a problem for them; they took the identity of the categories and being for granted. Hegel clearly saw this gulf dividing him from the tradition and described its stance as naïve in the Introduction to the *Encyclopedia Logic*. As such, not only is Hegel closer to Kant, but without the Kantian backdrop his entire undertaking in the *Logic* would not have been possible, because a solution to the problem can be offered only after the problem itself is clearly conceived.

What Kant did that Hegel considered to be the fundamental breakthrough in the history of philosophy is that he raised the question of the conditions of the possibility of agreement between thought and being, and gave an account of *why*

reality had to correspond to certain determinations of thought. On the other hand, Aristotle, according to Hegel, carried out an important task as “he was the first to undertake [the] description” of “the natural history of the phenomena of thinking just as they occur” (WL 595). However, while this is an important undertaking, it is not the problem that Hegel sees as central to philosophy and tries to solve in the *Logic*.

The pressing problem for Hegel is to identify the grounds of attributing the structure of the determinations of thought to the determinations of being, as well as to come up with a full account of the consequences one can draw from the possibility of such grounds. Hegel believes that Kant addressed the first prong of the problem (although not to Hegel’s full satisfaction), while almost completely neglecting the second one. Kant’s greatest contribution, therefore, was the clear identification of the problem, making it possible to look for a solution to it. Hence, Kant stands at the epicenter of the transformation of the perspective, which Hegel sees as having taken place between his and the traditional approaches as described in the above-cited passage.

Thus for example, the forms of the positive judgment is accepted as something perfectly correct in itself, the question whether such a judgment is true depending solely on the content. Whether this form is in its own self a form of truth, whether the proposition it enunciates, the individual is universal is not inherently dialectical, is a question that no one thinks of investigating. ... A logic that does not perform this task can at most claim the values of a descriptive natural history. (WL 594)

The latter perspective is clearly the one Hegel associates with Aristotle, while the earlier is the one that Hegel himself upholds. The stance from which the question is posed, “Whether this form is in its own self a form of truth,” is obviously made possible after Kant’s identification of the problem of correspondence between the categories (hence logical forms of judgment) and reality, making it the guiding thread of his transcendental philosophy. Hence, Stern’s Aristotelian interpretation arises not only from a selective reading of Hegel, but perhaps even more from merely surface-level interpretation of the claims and passages based on which he is advancing such reading.

## **2.7) Series of Self-relational Models**

The bottom line is that the relational schema laid out by Hegel in the *Doctrine of The Concept* presents the account of actuality in which the Kantian insight about the possibility of synthetic a priori cognition is brought to its logical conclusion. It presents the onto-logical space in which the standard division between the subject and the object, cognition and reality, has been overcome and hence the promise made in the phenomenology of spirit about grasping substance as a subject is brought to its fulfillment. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that the basic ontological structure, *the concept*, that Hegel presents in this culminating part of the *Logic* exhibits the defining characteristic of Kant’s transcendental apperception: self-relationality.



This self-relationality is presented in the theory of the concept as the self-relationality of the immanent structure of the concept. That is to say, the structure of unity between the dynamic and the static moments that takes roots in the Kantian notion of the transcendental apperception is emerging here as a unity and mutual dependence of the moments of the concept: universality, particularity, and individuality. As we shall see, each one of these moments, and not only the idea of their unity, has its precursors in Kant's system. But the Hegelian account of the concept, unlike the corresponding elements in Kant, has often been seen as particularly murky and resisting any coherent interpretation. One reason for this is that Hegel presents not one but a whole series of different models of unity of the moments of the concept. Granted that these models are arranged in the ascending order of adequacy for the full mediation between the three moments, the natural question to ask is why Hegel does not directly go to the last—the fully mediated—model, but instead picks the torturous road of twists and turns of the previous stages. In answering this question, what comes first to mind is Hegel's well-known claim from the Preface to *The Phenomenology of Spirit*:

Truth and falsehood as commonly understood belong to those sharply defined ideas which claim a completely fixed nature of their own, one standing in solid isolation on this side, the other on that, without any community between them. Against that view it must be pointed out, that truth is not like stamped coin that is issued ready from the mint and so can be taken up and used.... Just in the interest of their real meaning, precisely because we want to designate the aspect or moment of complete otherness, the terms true and false must no longer be used where their otherness has been cancelled and superseded. Just as the expressions 'unity of subject and

object', of 'finite and infinite', of 'being and thought', etc., are clumsy when subject and object, etc., are taken to mean what they are outside their unity, and are thus in that unity not meant to be what its very expression conveys. (*Phenomenology*, Par 39)

Considering that the Preface to *Phenomenology* was written by Hegel for his system as a whole, one of the reasons behind his strategy is, instead of forcing the ontological vision foreign to the readers onto them, to gradually guide them from their standpoint to his vision of actuality, in order to allow the immanent necessity of the commitments they are already upholding to guide them through the stages of development and ultimately arrive at the properly comprehended vision of actuality.

Hence, as we shall see, our understanding of the moments of the concept—*universality*, *particularity*, and *individuality*—are undergoing continuous transformation as we make our way through the stages of mediations in the *Syllogism* chapter. Their final form—that is, the most adequately comprehended one—that makes possible the self-relational structure of the concept to be clearly perceived is a product of the process of mediation that has taken place through the previous stages of the *Syllogism* chapter. This can be described as the internal reason for choosing the complex option as each stage of mediation is pointing to the moments of the concept engaged in the subsequent stage. There is another angle from which we can look at the issue. The different phases of mediation are not only developmental stages in the education of consciousness itself, but they also express ontological models. We shall see that each inadequate schema of mediation presented by Hegel in the *Syllogism* chapter is a model that stands for a major

alternative ontological vision. By presenting them in this specific hierarchical order, starting with the most impoverished model and culminating with Hegel's own stance, he highlights the superiority of his own vision over the alternatives.

### **3) The Three Moments of the Concept**

From the very beginning of his articulation of the structure of the concept, Hegel emphasizes its self-relational character. Indeed, as will be made clear in the following paragraphs, a very strong sense of unity between its elements plays a key role in the inner architectonics of the concept. To begin with, the unity under discussion cannot be reduced to the mere idea of compositionality. We are dealing instead with a deeper sense of unity between the elements, each internally related and in a certain sense even encapsulating the others. Here, just as in many other crucial points of Hegel's system, his Kantian heritage proves to be the best segue into the topic. The unity that Hegel describes as the defining feature of the concept is easily traceable back to the Kantian transcendental apperception, acknowledged by Hegel as "one of the profoundest and truest insights to be found in the *Critique of Pure Reason*" (WL 584).

In Hegel's hand, however, this idea of unity undergoes a significant reorientation; if for Kant the transcendental apperception is the most fundamental

element, the source of the logical functions of judgment and hence of all conceptual content, Hegel is positing the basic structure of the concept as the grounding principle. This is a turn away from the psychologism of Kant's critical philosophy and its substitution with the ontological vision, according to which neither the subject nor the object is seen as the grounding principle of reality. Instead, the fundamental ontological schema is articulated in the logical space within which the standard bifurcated model is left behind. For Hegel it is this basic schema making up the architectonic structure of the concept that lies at the foundation of the I, not vice versa—"The Concept, when it has developed into a *concrete existence* that is itself free, is none other than the I or pure self-consciousness" (WL 583). Hegel's strategy in the *Logic* is to demonstrate that the fundamental self-relational ontological structure emerges as a necessary ground for the most basic determinations of first Being and later of Essence, once the meanings and implications of these determinations are set in motion via reflective thought.

### **3.1) Locus of Intentionality and Hegel's Fundamental Shift**

In light of this, although with Hegel, as with Kant, the identity of the subject, the concept, and the objectivity is a very important point, he is nevertheless not merely reducing the concept and objectivity to the subject. Hegel is rather aiming to uncover the basic structure that all three sides have in common. While Kant first reduced objectivity to the concept—"an object is that in the concept of which the manifold of a given intuition is united" (CPR 137) —and ultimately traced the basic

conceptual structure back to the subject, Hegel wants to shift the center of gravity from the subject to the concept. For him it is the subject that is an actualization of the schema immanent to the concept, the concept that is “developed into a *concrete existence*.” Thus on the one hand, Hegel is following Kant’s footsteps in maintaining that the ground of the object, its “foundation and truth,” is the concept; on the other hand, he wants to avoid the Kantian reduction of the concept to the realization of the subject’s cognitive constitution. Instead, he is arguing that the concept itself has a rich inner structure that it does indeed share with the subject but is related to it as the condition to the conditioned.

For proper understanding of the significance of the shift that has taken place here, first from the object to the subject as done by Kant and then by Hegel from the subject to the concept as the central element of his ontology, it is helpful to take a look at Robert Brandom’s description of the related shift in the “fundamental locus of intentionality.” Brandom is looking at the issue of the relation between the mental realms and linguistic practices regarding the question where should we locate the “native and original locus of concept use.” According to the traditional approach, the mental realm has the pride of place, as it is in our mind that we form thoughts, generate conceptual content, and then communicate them to others.

Concepts are applied in the realms of language by the public use of sentences and other linguistic expressions. They are applied in the realm of the mind by the private adoption of any rational reliance on beliefs and other intentional state. The philosophical tradition from Descartes to Kant took for granted a mentalistic order of expression that privileged the mind as the native and original locus of concept use, relegating language to a

secondary. Late-coming, merely instrumental role in communicating to others thoughts already full-formed in a prior mental arena within the individual. (Brandom 2000, 5)

Brandom juxtaposes and contrasts this to two alternative views. One of them belongs to Dummett, who wants to reverse the axis of dependency and grant to language the function of the original locus of the conceptual: “we have opposed throughout the view of assertion as the expression of an interior act of judgment; judgment, rather, is the interiorization of the external act of assertion” (Brandom 2000, 5). The other alternative is advanced by Davidson, for whom “neither language nor thinking can be fully explained in terms of the other, and neither has conceptual priority. The two are, indeed, linked in the sense that each requires the other in order to be understood, but the linkage is not so complete that either suffices, even when reasonably reinforced, to explicate the other” (Brandom 2000, 6).

Both of these alternatives are undermining the traditional assumption of the mental as the original locus of the generation of the conceptual content. What needs to be noted is that this assumption is a part of a larger dualistic backdrop that the tradition has been taking for granted—the dualism of the mental vs. physical realm where the former is the locus of thought, representations, concepts, etc., while the latter is that of the extended, inter-subjective, material etc. This deeply rooted presupposition stems from the Cartesian metaphysics with its clear-cut distinction between the mental vs. physical and their corresponding principle attributes, thought vs. extension. When considered against this background, it becomes clear

that while both Dummett and Davidson shift the priorities in the standard picture, they still remain within the scope of the dualistic framework. Neither by inverting the standard picture nor by demonstrating the interdependency between the language and thought are we rejecting the Cartesian dualism; all we are doing is exploring new possibilities within the conceptual space carved out by it.

Unlike these contemporary alternatives, Hegel wants to leave behind the standard dualistic picture altogether. According to him, both ends of the bifurcated model are mere abstractions from the more fundamental background, the articulation of which is undertaken in his *Doctrine of the Concept*. If the *Doctrine of Being* and *Doctrine of Essence* were concerned with the traditional categories and the determination of thought that grounded them, retaining dualistic ontology in the picture, the third part of the *Logic*, the *Doctrine of the Concept*, presents an account within which the division between the inner and the outer realms taken for granted by “the philosophical tradition from Descartes to Kant” is completely overcome. Whether linguistic, mental, or other kinds of activity, like social, political, etc., that involves application of concept and revision of the conceptual content, it is grounded on the schema that Hegel is explicating in the doctrine of the concept. Both the mind and world, the inner and the outer realms, are best understood not in abstraction from one another, nor with grounding one on the other, but through the realization that both are abstractions from the more fundamental structure that Hegel is proceeding to articulate in this part of the *Logic*.

As in many other key points of his system, here also Hegel is following the Kantian footsteps. For although Kant didn't fully free himself from it, he still in an important sense set up the conditions for overcoming dualistic metaphysics. The significant step taken in this direction by Kant is his assertion that the very same ground underlies and conditions the phenomena of both the inner and the outer realm. The activity of the mind for him is the ground of objects both of mental as well as physical space. For example, the desk that I'm looking at right now and my desire to bring it to order are objects of experience, one outer and the other inner, but for Kant both are outcomes of the activity of the mind guided by logical functions that constitute the basic structure of what he calls the *transcendental object* or *object in general*. Hence, the objects—whether belonging to the inner realm of the mind, thus occurring only in time but not in space, or to the outer realm that in addition to temporal are also spatial—are conditioned by the activity of the mind and guided by the logical functions of judgment. By tracing the grounds of both the inner and the outer objects to the same source, Kant is taking a significant step toward overcoming the dualism with respect to objects of experience. But this is clearly only a first step, rather than a full-fledged effort to overcome the bifurcated background—while the ontological gap between the realms of the inner and the outer objects was significantly shaken, the same was not done with respect to the activity, as Kant obviously gives the pride of place to the action of the mind.

Hence, we can see Hegel's project as taking a further step by rejecting the dualism not only regarding the objects of experience but also regarding the activity that makes this objects possible, and elaborating a new type of ontology that leaves



the traditional dualistic structure behind. In other words, Kant had overcome the ontological gap on the level of the conditioned, but not on the level of the conditions; and Hegel is bringing the Kantian revolution to its completion. As such, when we say that *action* for Hegel is an application of concepts, we should not understand this as the mental object in the inner realm that guides action taking place either in the extra-mental physical world or within the inner space. Neither the inner nor the outer space is the privileged locus of action or of conceptual. Both mental and non-mental are mere abstractions from the basic substructure of Hegel's transcendental ontology that he articulated in the *Doctrine of the Concept*. It is not the action of the mind that grounds phenomena but the fundamental schema that conditions the objects as well as the actions both of the mind and in the world.

We can see how much more thorough Hegel's rejection of the traditional assumption of the mental realm as "the native land" of concepts is, compared to Dummett's and Davidson's interpretation of him. Whether one replaces judgment with assertion as the original locus of the concept application, or maintains that neither thought nor language has conceptual priority and each requires the other in order to be understood, one is not questioning the fundamental dualistic background of the traditional theories. The mental and material still remain as the two realms divided by ontological gap. Contrary to this, Hegel leaves the bifurcated ontology behind by arguing that both sides of the divide are mere abstraction of the more basic schema that grounds them. This is the schema that is outlined in his theory of concept as the syllogistic mediational models between the three moments that make up the architectonic structure of the concept.

### 3.2) Universality

The inner structure of the Hegelian *concept* consists of three moments: *universality*, *particularity*, and *individuality*. As has already been mentioned above, these are not mutually excluding elements that can be separated from one another, but each one of them is internally related to the other two and embraces the totality of the concept (WL 600). Hegel begins his presentation of the moments with universality and he has good reasons for it. While each one of the three moments plays an indispensable role in constituting the concept, *universality* occupies a special place amongst them. Not only does it encompass the whole concept, “The universal is thus the totality of the Concept” (WL 604), but it is also described as “the pure Concept” or the moment that stands for “the pure identical self-relation” of the concept (WL 600). Moreover, as the discussion that follows shall demonstrate, universality is associated by Hegel with the pivotal characteristic of the concept—its creative potential. Therefore, he is well justified in starting the discussion of the moments of the concept with *universality*.

#### 3.2.1) Not an Abstract Universal

Hegel’s understanding of universality is very different from its ordinary conception that he describes as *abstract* universal. In fact, if this were not the case, his claim about universality comprising the entire structure of the concept, which also includes particularity and individuality, would be completely

incomprehensible. Were the universal a product of abstraction from the individuals, it obviously could not have the elements that it has been abstracted from present within it. As we shall see, the ordinary notion of the abstract universal has more in common with another moment of the Hegelian concept, *particularity*. Hence, these are the two important questions that have to be addressed at this point: What exactly does Hegel mean by *genuine universality*? And how is it related to the ordinary conception of the terms that he calls *abstract* or *impoverished universality* and sets apart from his own usage of the term?

### **3.2.2) Universality as a Process and Creative Power vs. Representational Model**

Universality is described by Hegel as a “free power,” “the shaper and creator” that “takes its other within its embrace ... without *doing violence* to it” (WL 603). He also refers to it as a *process* that posits differences: “the universal is a process in which it posits the differences” (WL 605). These might strike readers as very puzzling claims, putting forward an utterly extravagant conception of universality that has nothing in common with the way the term is traditionally understood. But this is only a first impression. Hegel’s position has much in common with such prominent figures in the tradition as Aristotle and Kant.

The apparent perplexity of this notion comes from Hegel’s effort to emphasize the contrast with the traditional conception of it—the universal as *abstract* representation standing externally to what it represents. One of the central

goals Hegel is pursuing in his *Logic* is to overcome the representationalist presuppositions deeply imbedded in the tradition he inherited, according to which reality is cut into two parts, the mental (the domain of the representations) and the non-mental (the domain of represented), and the universals belong to the former while referring to the latter as a product of abstraction from it. Hegel wants to replace this model with the one that grants to universality the function of meaning-producing activity, a power that gets realized through the process of positing differences, similarities, contrasts, identities, etc., and hence generating the conceptual content that illuminates instead of representing the determinations of the world. It is due to this effort to emphasize the contrast with the traditional approach that it is easy to overlook the influential precursors of the Hegelian notion of universality, Aristotle being one of them. A good starting point, therefore, to begin understanding the Hegelian conception of universality is Aristotle's notion of the *form*.

### **3.2.3) The Aristotelian Connection**

For Aristotle, each thing we find in nature, including organisms, their parts, basic elements, etc., has within it *the principle of change and rest* that determines the structure that the given thing has at any stage of its existence; the same principle functions as the power that drives the course of its change and governs its interaction with other entities. This structuring and development-driving power is what Aristotle called the *form*. We can identify different aspects of the way a form determines an individual by looking at an example; let's take a willow tree. At every stage of its development—be it a seed, a small sapling, fully grown willow tree or an

already old, dying plant—the state that the thing finds itself in is a product and an expression of the principle that determines what it means to be a willow tree, its *form*. This principle is what sets willow apart from oak, pine, and more radically from other kinds of things like frog, human, water, etc. Thus, the principle determines the structure of the thing, its composition, and nature of functioning at different stages of its development.

Another perspective from which we can approach the determination of the individual by the universal is related to the principle that encompasses the whole development of the thing. We can talk of the presence of the principle in an object not at any specific stage of its development, but as a creative force that encompasses the entire lifecycle of a willow tree. The form as the creative power has to determine not only certain stages in the development of a willow tree, but its entire lifecycle. This points us to the third aspect in which the form governs an individual—as the principle determining the transition from one stage to the next one. Hence, we can identify three important and interrelated aspects in which the form determines the individual's nature and its development. First, each stage of development is a manifestation of the principle. Second, the principle encompasses the totality of the thing's determinations; and third, the principle is in place at each determinate stage qua force that propels its further development.

### 3.2.3.1) *Three Moments Similar in Hegel*

Analogies for each one of these three aspects of the form's determination of the individual can be located in the Hegelian notion of the universality. When Hegel claims that the universal is a *creative power*, which "when posits itself in a determination, *remains* therein what it is" (WL 602), and that "the universal is ... substance of its determinations" (WL 603), he is describing the relation between universality and its particular determinations, which is analogous to the Aristotelian thesis that each determination of the given particular is a manifestation of its form or the principle of change. Within both the Aristotelian and the Hegelian accounts, the structure that the given determination exhibits reveals the nature of the creative power at work. This claim of the immanence of the universal in its determinations goes beyond the mere assertion of the presence of the characteristics of the genus in its species. In other words, the spatial metaphor that Hegel uses here about the presence of the universal in the individual stands for the relation in a stronger sense than the one that mirrors the presence of the conceptual content of the definition of the genus-concept like tree, into that of the species-concepts like willow, pine, oak, and etcetera. Hegel sees the latter relation as characteristic of the abstract universal and describes it as "outward going" (WL 604), while the genuine universal he considers to be "bent back into itself" (WL 604).

What Hegel means by this is that while the conceptual content of the abstract universal is a product of the process of abstraction, throughout which the features that differentiate individuals falling under this universal are left out (hence the abstract universal can be described by him as "lifted out" of the individuals), the

matters are quite different with Hegel's own conception of universality. The Hegelian notion of universal is "bent back" in the sense that it is not a product of abstraction from the individual; instead it plays a formative role in its determination. If the abstract universal, which Hegel also describes as *impoverished* universal, is stripped off the determinations present in the other moments of the concept, the Hegelian universal retains them—or rather, as we shall see, retains the principle of their generation. Hence, the spatial metaphor of the immanence of the universal to the particular should be understood as the former playing a role in the generation of the latter. Here the Aristotelian analogy becomes handy, because in Aristotle also the universal can function as the formative principle of particular determinations. However, it should also be kept in mind that the two models are not completely identical. The relation between universality and the other two moments of the concept as the analysis undertaken in this and the following chapter demonstrate is of a complex nature, and the Aristotelian analogy only scratches the surface without giving us an adequate access to its intricate details.

Another related aspect of the similarity is that universality encompasses the totality of all of its determinations. Hegelian universality is not only expressed in each and every one of its determinations, but it also encapsulates them all within itself. As Hegel puts it, "it [universality] contains within itself difference and determinateness in the highest degree" (WL 601), or, again, "The determinateness... is not introduced from outside when we speak of it in connection with the universal.... The universal is thus the totality of the Concept; it is concrete and far from being empty, it has through its concept a *content*, and a content in which it not

only maintains itself but one which is its own" (WL 603-604). Here again the similarity with the Aristotelian doctrine can be a stepping stone into understanding Hegel's position—a form is not merely the animating principle immanent to the different stages of development of a natural being, but it also is the totality of the determinations that the being goes through. For Aristotle, without comprehending the different stages of development of a tree, for example, it is not possible to grasp the *form* of *tree*. But here again, it should be pointed out right away that notwithstanding some similarities, the immanence of the particular determinations and the individuality to the universality for Hegel is not quite identical to the Aristotelian model. As we shall see soon, for Hegel the spatial metaphor of the universality embracing the individuality and particularity should be understood in quite a different sense from the immanence of the different determinations to the Aristotelian notion of the substance-universal. This should hardly be surprising, as Hegel's claim is a direct consequence of the reformulated notion of the universality that leaves behind the fundamental assumptions of the traditional metaphysics, while the Aristotelian model is a prime example of the tradition. As such, when using Aristotle as a stepping stone into the Hegelian system, we should keep in mind that the analogy serves just a heuristic function and ought not to be pushed too far.

Having looked at the two important similarities between the Hegelian and the Aristotelian theories, we can begin to see what Hegel means when describing universality as *free power*. First, *freedom* for Hegel means *being with itself in its other*, and this is an exact description of the logical structure of the concept when it comes to the relation between universality on the one hand and the other two



moments on the other hand. Particularity and individuality are the products of the self-differentiation of universality; hence, it encounters nothing foreign to itself in them. This is what Hegel has in mind in the already cited passage: “The universal is therefore *free* power; it is itself and takes its other within its embrace, but without *doing violence* to it; on the contrary, the universal is, in its other, in peaceful communion with itself” (WL 603).

But Hegel describes universality not merely as free but as free *power*, pointing us to the third aspect of the similarity with the Aristotelian notion of the form. Universal in both cases functions like a power that determines the course of development; it is “the principle of change,” to put in the Aristotelian terms. Universality, therefore, not only is expressed by its particular determinations and encompasses all determinations within itself, but it also is the principle that drives the transformation—or rather, the process—of the formation of these determinations. The previous chapter has presented a detailed analysis of the basic determinations of reflection that function as the guiding principles of the empirical-concept-generation process. In the following chapter, I shall look at the details of the relation between universality as process of formation of conceptual content and the empirical determinations formed thereby.

#### **3.2.4) Stern’s Aristotelian Reading**

Having examined the similarities with the Aristotelian theory of the form, we should keep it in mind that the analogy is only a useful entry point in understanding

Hegel's account of the inner structure of the concept and ought not to be pushed too far. Reading too much Aristotelianism into Hegel's notion of universality and the concept in general will lead us to ascribe to him an organism-like account of the concept, which does not do justice to what Hegel says about this key element of his transcendental ontology.

Robert Stern's interpretation of the Hegelian notion of universal is a good example of positing Hegel too close to Aristotle. While looking at the British idealists' appropriation of Hegel's notion of the *concrete universal*, Stern criticizes their claim that the universal embraces the individuals that exemplify it and instead is advancing a reading akin to Aristotle's notion of the form as substance-universal. Stern claims that the Hegelian notion of the universal should be understood as nothing else but the "characteristics of the kind to which the individuals belong (men qua men are rational)" (Stern 2009, 156). According to him, then, the British idealists, by offering an obscure and extravagant reading of the universal as the ultimate ground that embraces individuals, misinterpreted Hegel's more modest and traditional Aristotelian claim about universal consisting of the essential characteristics belonging to a given genus. While neither of these readings does full justice to Hegel's position, I think the one upheld by the British idealists is closer to Hegel than Stern's, since while the former readily acknowledges the central function of the universal moments in the constitution of the individuals and their determinations, the latter effectively reduces it to the Aristotelian position.

The British idealists' rendering of the Hegelian notion of *universality* is described by Stern in the following exposition.

'the universal in the form of a world', as Bosanquet put it, rather than in the form of a class. By 'the universal in the form of a world', Bosanquet meant that individuals which exemplify this universal are thereby related with one another in a system of mutual interdependence, whereas individuals that merely belong to the same class are not. Josiah Royce (not of course, strictly a *British* Idealist, but nonetheless greatly influenced by them) puts this idea as follows: This universal is no abstraction at all, but a perfectly concrete whole, since the facts are, one and all, not mere examples of it, but are embraced in it, are brought forth by it as its moments, and exist only in relation to one another and to it. It is the vine; they, the individuals, are the branches. (Stern 2009, 150)

As is evident in this passage, Stern asserts that the universal is seen by the British idealists as the ground of the other two moments of the concept. The claim of the universal embracing individuals is understood as the universal being involved in the constitution of the determinations of the individuals. This reading clearly resonates well with the above-examined claims of Hegel regarding universality being the creative *force* or the *process* generating conceptual content. It also asserts a high degree of interdependency between individuals, due to them being the products of the very same process of universalization. The idea is that each individuated entity with the totality of its properties is an outcome of the overall process of the generation of determinations that includes other entities individuated together with it. This renders individuals not only being "embraced" by the universal but also existing "*only* in relation to one another." This acknowledgment of the robust

grounding role that the universal is playing in relation to the individuals and their determinations is the strongest aspect of the reading that Stern ascribes to the British idealist.

Stern rejects the British idealist perspective in favor of the interpretation that reduces Hegel's notion of the universality to a set of characteristics of a class. Universal is conceived here as a substance-universal comprised of a set of determinations that makes up the essential qualities of the given genera or natural kind. What binds the individuals belonging to the given universal together, according to Stern's Aristotelian reading, is their shared instantiation of the properties included in the given universal. For instance, if the universal *man* is defined as *the rational animal*, then the determination of the rationality alongside all other determinations belonging to the universal *animal* will be exhibited in the individual man, exhausting the sense in which they are related to the universal man. Stern writes:

While the Concept, as the interrelation of universality, particularity, and individuality, has a holistic structure, in the sense that (as we have seen) each 'moment' is claimed to be only intelligible in relation to the others and through the others, and while the substance universal characterizes the individual as a whole in a way that unifies its particular properties, there is no suggestion here that individuals as such are interrelated, in the manner of Bradley's red-haired men. So, when Royce writes that 'the universal 'man' is thus konkret in two senses, namely in so far as in it all men are together, and in so far as through it all Qualitäten of each man are united' I would accept only the second of these senses as being part of Hegel's conception of the concrete universal, and not the first. (Stern 2009, 158)

Now Stern's reading stands in obvious contradiction with the passages cited above, where Hegel is explicit about the universal moment's formative role for particularity as well as individuality, and describes it as a process that grounds and embraces the other moments of the concept. The weakest aspect of his reading is its inability to do justice to the dynamic character of the Hegelian concept, its key and most essential elements, which are repeatedly described by Hegel as a *process* and a *creative power*. The substance universals are the static sets of determinations that the cognitive process find in the world and extracts from it; while the Hegelian universal is the source of dynamism, it is the process that furnishes these static determinations.

There is a dynamic moment in the Aristotelian model as well (and this is the reason that we can use it as a stepping stone into the Hegelian system), but Stern ignores it, instead focusing on its static aspect. Moreover, even if Stern had used it to argue for similarity with Hegel, he could have not gone beyond mere surface resemblance, since the dynamic moment in the Aristotelian conception of universal is present there on a different level than in the Hegelian one. For Aristotle, form as an already actualized static set of determinations serves as the propagator of development of individuals, while for Hegel these very sets of determinations are the products of the creative power at work. For Aristotle, the substance universal with its complete set of determinations is out there in the world, immanently structuring reality. Cognitive processes are related to the substance universal externally without playing any role in determination of the elements and the structural relations found in the substance-universal.

The Hegelian notion of the universal, on the other hand, exhibits a very different relation to the process of reflection. As we shall see shortly, Hegel identifies universality with the determination-generating processes. Universality qua creative power is the self-relational process of reflection that posits all determinations and embraces them. Aristotle and Hegel therefore conceive radically differently the relation between thought and the determinations of universals. While in the case of the former, thought is external to the already existing universals and its determinations, and all it can do is to grasp or mirror them, with the latter case we have thought as the process identical to universality that functions as the ground of all determinacy. As such, to identify the Hegelian notion of *universal* with the Aristotelian *substance-universal* is to fail to appreciate even the first stage of the revolutionary aspect of Hegel's theory—the relation between thought and reality—not to mention its full extent where the dualistic traditional metaphysics is fully left behind together with its collateral assumption. Therefore, notwithstanding some degree of similarities, Hegel's stance cannot be simply identified with the Aristotelian position as Stern attempts to do.

### **3.2.5) Kantian Connection**

Aristotle is not the only, or even the most direct precursor, of the Hegelian notion of the concept and its moments. Hegel's notion of universal as a creative power is more closely related to Kant, who maintained that the logical functions of judgment are the most basic forms of the activity of the mind on which both pure

and empirical concepts are grounded. The pure concepts of the understanding or the categories are the general representations of the synthesis of intuitions carried out by these logical functions, as Kant states in the famous passage from the Metaphysical deduction:

The same function that gives unity to the different representations in a judgment also gives unity to the mere synthesis of different representations in an intuition, which, expressed generally, is called the pure concept of understanding. The same understanding, therefore, and indeed by means of *the very same actions* through which it brings the logical form of a judgment into concepts by means of the analytic unity, also brings a transcendental content into its representations by means of the synthetic unity of the manifold in intuition in general. (A79/B105)

The very same functions of synthesis are guiding the process of formation of empirical concepts. According to Kant, we form new empirical concept through the operation of the mind that is guided by the *concepts of comparison*, which correspond one to one to the logical functions of judgment (identity and difference to quantitative, agreement and conflict to qualitative, inner and outer to relational). To be more specific, we can apply these concepts of comparison—or, ultimately, logical functions of judgment—to the process of our apprehension of empirical objects. Thus, new empirical concepts are generated from the process of sifting through the rule-guided apprehension of phenomena and forming new determinations through this process. The logical functions are involved on both levels of this activity. They guide the process of comparison of apprehension of empirical phenomena, and they are also already ingrained in the rules of

apprehension as the latter are nothing but the previously formed empirical concepts. Thus, for Kant, the activity of the mind guided by the logical functions of judgment is the basic formative process that posits all determinations.

The first thing to note here is that Kant is rejecting the representationalist model according to which the cognitive purport of conceptual content is a function of the adequacy of its representation of the mind-external reality. The source of determinations in the traditional model, including the Aristotelian one, is external to the mind, and the justification of cognitive contentfulness of our concepts rests on their representational correctness of the mind-external world. With Kant, contrary to this, the normative authority of the determinations is traced to the objectifying capacities of the minds itself, more specifically, to the logical functions of judgment that confer cognitive purport to determinations posited by the creative activity of the mind. Hence, Hegel is following Kant's footsteps when claiming that the *universal* is a determination-positing creative power, "thinking as activity is the active universal, and indeed the self-activating universal" (§ 20, EL). Hegel further notes,

It [universal] differentiates itself internally, and this is a *determining*, because the differentiation is one with the universality. Accordingly, the universal is a process in which it posits the differences themselves as universal and self-related. They thereby become fixed, isolated differences. ... Herein consists the *creative power* of the Concept, a power which is to be comprehended only in this, the Concept's innermost core. (WL 605.2)

Hence, instead of the traditional representational model, according to which a concept and its determinations were supposed to mirror the determinate features of



the mind-external world, Hegel takes up the Kantian approach—the mind as the source of the cognitive purport of determinations. Universal moment of the concept is that *creative*, cognitive content conferring *power* that is responsible for generating the conceptual content and is describes by Hegel as the concepts “innermost core.”

Another important aspect that needs to be noted in the above-quoted passage is that Hegel describes universality as the *difference positing process*, clearly pointing us to the determinations of reflection presented in the *Doctrine of Essence*. He sees the universality as the creative process, the activity of thinking through which the conceptual content is generated; it is the very same process of thinking that he has discussed in the *Doctrine of Essence* where an interrelated system of determinations of reflection is laid out. Universal, that is, the “self-identical” moment of the concept, is differentiating itself, argues Hegel, mirroring the sequence of identity and difference that we have seen in the doctrine of essence—the two pivotal determinations that the process of reflection and generation of ordinary conceptual content proceeds with. Here is another key passage where Hegel explains the nature of relation between the determinations posited by the universal moment of the concept and the process of reflection he investigated in the doctrine of essence.

Difference, as it shows itself here, is in its Concept and therefore in its truth. All previous difference has this unity in principle (im begriffe). As immediate difference in the sphere of being, it is limit of an other; in reflection it is relative and posited as essentially relating itself to its other; here therefore the unity of the Concept begins to be posited, but at first it is only illusory being in another. The true meaning and resolution of these

determinations is just this, that they attain to their Concept, their truth; being, determinate being, something, or whole and parts, etc. substance and accidents, cause and effect, are grasped as determinate concepts when each is cognized in unity with its other or opposite determination. (WL 607.2)

The empirical concept generating process of reflection that Hegel has presented in the *Doctrine of Essence* attains its truth in the *Doctrine of the Concept*, claims Hegel. Hence, in the *Doctrine of the Concept*, Hegel returns to the very same ground that was covered in the *Doctrine of Essence*, but this time from a more developed standpoint that allows us to locate the function that the activity of reflection and its basic forms have within the larger account of reality. In other words, if in the doctrine of essence the process of generation of determinate content and the basic formal vocabulary by means of which this content is generated was investigated in greater detail, now Hegel steps back and allows us to see where that account fits in the most comprehensive account of his transcendental ontology. The activity of positing differences, and identities, diversities, and oppositions that I have discussed in Chapter 3 is now revealed to be one of the three essential aspects of the ontological structure that Hegel calls the concept—its universal moment (the other two being particularity and individuality).

Moreover, in a certain sense, this process is supposed to grasp the totality of actuality since, as we were told, each moment of the concept embraces it fully (WL 600). Therefore, one way we can regard reality, according to Hegel, is through conceiving it as essentially grounded on the conceptual-content-generating activity. In other words, he wants to maintain that there is nothing to reality that could claim

complete independence from this determination-positing process. But obviously, this is only a part of a larger picture, and we still need to look at the other two moments of the concept, as well as their relation to one another, to gain a comprehensive account of Hegel's transcendental ontology. The account of the dynamic aspect of the concept has to be complemented with the account of the totality of determinate conceptual content and the specific relation of their unity. As we shall see, Hegel will be presenting different models of relation between the moments of the concept in the *Syllogism* chapter and will culminate his account with what he takes to be the genuine nature of their unity.

Hence, the Kantian insight that the synthetic activity guided by the logical functions of judgment and serving as the most basic determinations of all conceptual content, whether related to the combination of the sensible or the conceptual manifold, is the main precursor of the Hegelian notion of the universal as the creative process that generates and embraces all determination. This is the reason that Hegel hails the transcendental unity of apperception that is identical for Kant to the logical functions of judgment as the highest point of Kant's philosophy. Hegel's description of the universality as the "pure identical self-relation" (SL, 601) is a reflection of the Kantian identification of the apperception with the logical functions of judgment. But as at many other critical points, here Hegel also does not merely follow the Kantian footsteps but develops them further and brings them to what he sees as their logical conclusion. The important difference here is that while Hegel picks up the Kantian thread and integrates the activity of the mind guided by the determinations of reflection within his theory of the concept, he is not confining

the universal as the active power to merely mental processes. The determinations of reflection as the basic functions of the content-generating process of thinking were considered by Hegel at a different stage of development of his system from the one we see in the *Doctrine of the Concept*. In the *Doctrine of Essence*, he was still dealing with the issue of grounding *being* on *essence* or developing the notion of *being qua thought*; he was at the epicenter of bringing Kant's Copernican revolution to its completion.

Now on the other hand, in the *Doctrine of the Concept*, that task has already been accomplished and the schism between thought and being is overcome. Thus the determinations of reflection as the activity-guiding functions no longer belong to reflection exclusively—they are the basic functions of action in general. This is the reason Hegel is claiming that “thinking as *activity* is the active universal” instead of merely asserting that “thinking is active universal, ...the self-activating universal.” In other words, the activity as such is the universal moment of the concept in action and reflection is only one modality in which this activity can be carried out. The activity that furnish determinate content—the second moment of the Hegelian notion of concept that Hegel calls *particularity*—is not limited to the mental but also includes inter-subjective activities, social, historical, and etcetera, which are processes through which different conceptions get applied, tested, and modified. Hence, the formal schemata that Hegel presents in the theory of the concept, judgments, syllogisms, is not merely a series of determinations related to different kinds of mental representations, but different models of actuality that includes the mental activity but is not limited to it.

### 3.3) Particularity

While Hegel's notion of universality can be traced back to the Kantian understanding of the cognitive activity and hence one of the ways that Kant uses the term concept (i.e., the consciousness of the unity of the act of synthesis), the second moment of the Hegelian concept, particularity, is related to the other meaning that Kant has for the same term, "universal or reflected representation." As such, the overall structure of Hegel's concept can be argued to have already existed in an incipient form in Kant: the act of synthesis as the universal moment; universal and reflected representation as the particular that is the product of self-differentiation of the first moment; and the third moment, individuality, which for Hegel is the unity of the previous two.

According to Hegel, the second moment of the concept—particularity—captures the totality of the concept, just like the first moment, but it does so in its own way. Hegel describes it as the outcome of the first negation of the universal. "As negativity in general or in accordance with the first, immediate negation, the universal contains determinateness generally as particularity" (WL 603). The universal, as the creative, dynamic power, generates an interrelated system of determinations and this system is what Hegel calls the particular moment of the concept. Instead of the dynamic process (i.e., the nature of universality), now we have the static determinations that the process has produced; instead of the mediation, the mediated. This first negation of the universal is a self-

externalization—the splitting of the concept into two moments: universality and particularity.

### **3.3.1) Particularity as Determination of Universality**

The *particular* moment of the concept is a product of the universal moment's self-differentiation.

The universal determines itself, and so is itself the particular; the determinateness is its difference; it is only differentiated from itself. Its species are therefore only (a) the universal itself and (b) the particular. The universal is as concept itself and its opposite, and this opposite is in turn the universal itself as its posited determinateness; the universal overreaches it and, in it, it is with itself. Thus it is the totality and the principle of its diversity, which is determined wholly and solely through itself. (WL 606)

Hegel makes three important claims in this passage that I would like to take a closer look at. First, he clearly describes particularity as generated from universality and sees it as an outcome of its self-differentiation or positing determinations immanent to itself. Second, Hegel describes the universal as containing the principle of diversity of the content by which it generates the particular moment of the concept. Third, universal is declared to be the totality of its diversity and being with itself in it.

### 3.3.2) Particular as self-differentiated universal

I shall start with the first point; the universal, as we have seen, is the process of reflection or the activity of thinking through which the determinate conceptual content is generated. Hence, granted that Hegel describes the particularity as being generated from the universality through its self-differentiation and positing of determinations, the particularity is the product of the conceptual content generating process guided by the formal schema presented by Hegel as the determinations of reflection. What Hegel means by the technical term *particularity* is a holistic system of inferentially interrelated determinations that make up the totality of its conceptual content. The constellation of the empirical concepts is generated through the process of *thinking* in Hegel's technical meaning of the term, which includes reflection along the lines of the ordinary meaning of the term, as well as the application of the concepts through activity carried out in the inter-subjectively shared space that includes social and political institutions. Hegel describes the determinations that comprise the particularity moment of the concept as *abstract universals*:

This universality, with which the determinate clothes itself, is abstract universality. The particular has this universality in it as its essence; but in so far as the determinateness of the difference is posited and thereby has being, the universality is form in it, and the determinateness as such is its content. Universality becomes form inasmuch as the difference is something essential, just as in the pure universal it is, on the contrary, only absolute negativity and not a difference posited as such. (WL 608)

In this way, the particular moment of the concept is made up of the determinations we call empirical or the ordinary concepts. These have the form of abstract universality and have been generated through the process of discerning differences, similarities, and identities in experience, and forming new determinations on this basis. The Hegelian, the genuine, notion of universality, on the other hand, is described here as the “absolute negation,” related to the abstract universality as the ground to the grounded.

The particular moment of the concepts is the outcome of the self-differentiation of the universal that is the process of the generation on inferentially interrelated empirical concepts; hence, the particular moment of the ontological structure that Hegel calls concept is a system of the determinate conceptual content through which we relate to the world, including to our own selves as parts of this world. The claim of this content being the outcome of the self-differentiation of the universality should be understood as pointing to the relation that this system of empirical concepts stands to the process of thinking in the Hegelian understanding of the term. Thought, for Hegel at the stage of his transcendental ontological system we have reached in the *Doctrine of the Concept*, is no longer confined to merely mental phenomena; universality as the process of thinking that generates determinate conceptual content includes not merely mental activity taking place in the subject, but also the activity in the inter-subjectively shared reality. Social and political institutions, the whole normative landscape that guides our activity as a member of a given community are the actualizations or applications of the conceptual content that guide the process of further revision and transformation of



the process of generation and piecemeal revision of the conceptual content. Application of a concept in judgment and action are both activities that are included in the process that Hegel calls universality. This assimilation of the concepts and institution is a part of the overall rejection of the dualistic, mental vs. non-mental, bifurcated traditional ontology. Institutions cannot function without a certain set of empirical concepts, neither can the subjective states of the mind that have nothing in common with the determination in the inter-subjectively shared sphere qualify as concepts.

The chief example of such a concept that is actualized in social and political institutions and plays a crucial role in the development of history the way Hegel sees it is that of *Freedom*. In *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel outlines the basic schema he considers to be the reasonable social institutions culminating in the modern state that he sees as the actuality of concrete freedom (PR, par 260). Hegel's lectures on the philosophy of history are also a detailed examination of the formative process of this concept and the institutions and processes associated with it. The determinate meaning of the concept *freedom* is formed through complex historical processes that involve individual reflection, formation and functioning of political and social institutions, their downfalls and transformations, revision of the meaning of these determinations and their application through the actions of individuals and institutions.

In the above-cited passage, Hegel describes abstract universality as the *form* of the determinations of the particular: "the universality is form in it, and the

determinateness as such is its content. Universality becomes form” (WL 608). This is one more direct evidence of the Kantian roots of Hegel’s ontology, as for Kant, universality is the form of all concepts both empirical and a priori. Moreover, Kant explicitly associates the form of the concepts, their universality, with the process of their generation, “the form of the concept [its universality] as discursive representation is always made” (Longuenesse 1998, 119) as an outcome of the process of comparison, reflection, abstraction. Further, as we have seen in Chapter 3, the basic forms of operation of this process through which, according to Kant, the form of the concept is generated correspond to the determinations of reflection presented by Hegel in the *Logic of Essence*. Forms of all three subcategories of the concepts—empirical, mathematical, and the categories—are *made*, according to Kant; they are the products of the activity of the mind. In other words, universality in all three cases is associated with the determination-generating activity.

With the *matter* or the content of these three types of the concepts, however, the situation is quite different. In the case of the mathematical concepts, the matter is also made; just like the form, it is generated by the activity of the mind. This is what Kant means when, on numerous occasions in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, he claims that mathematical concepts can be exhibited in pure intuition. Both empirical and a priori concepts are different from the mathematical ones in this respect, as their matter instead of being, generated by the effort of the mind, is *given*, but given in different ways. With the empirical concepts, the matter is given via experience, while with the categories it is given a priori—that is, prior to experience. Hence, universality as the form of the Kantian notion of the concept is generated through

the activity of the mind, and this applies to both a priori and empirical concepts. Moreover, this activity of “comparison, reflection, abstraction” is guided by the very same forms as the determinations of reflection in Hegel’s account of it in the doctrine of essence. As such, down to the most intricate details, the most fundamental element of the Hegelian transcendental ontology—his theory of the concept—has Kantian themes ingrained in it; this makes it self-evident that Hegel’s system is Kantian through and through.

### **3.3.3) Abstract Universals Lack the Principle of difference**

One way in which Hegel sets apart the genuine from the abstract universality is the lack of principle of difference in the latter. Abstract universals is empty concept; “since its determinateness is not the principle of its difference; a principle contains the beginning and the essential nature of its development and realization” (WL 610.1). What Hegel means by this claim becomes clear when considered together with another important distinction he makes between his own conception of the universality (tied with the concrete universal) and the abstract universal, in his description of the former *self-contained* and *turned-towards-itself*, with abstract universal being *outward-going*.

But in regard to the other side, in which the genus is limited by its specific character, it has been observed that this as a lower genus, has its resolution in a higher universal. The latter, in its turn, can also be grasped as genus but as a more abstract one; but it always pertains only to that side of the determinate Concept which has a reference outwards. The truly higher universal is that in

which this outward-going side is taken back into the universality, the second negation, in which the determinateness is present simply as posited or as illusory being. Life, ego, spirit, absolute Concept, are not universal merely in the sense of higher genera, but are concretes whose determinateness, too, are not species or lower genera but genera which, in their reality, are absolutely self-contained and self-fulfilled. (WL 604-605)

Now, as we have seen, the Hegelian notion of the universality is the process guided by the functions presented as determination of reflection—identity, difference, contradiction, etc. —through which the revision and generation of new empirical concepts takes place. The claim of the presence of the principle of differentiation in the genuine universality is directly related to the claim of it being “turned toward itself,” instead of being “outward-going” as the abstract universals are. The idea is that the process of generation and the revision of conceptual content of a set of empirical concepts go hand in hand with them comprising a self-enclosed system of interrelated determinations. If we are not dealing with such a totality, but only with an isolated determination or even with a limited subset of a system of determinations, the conditions for the process of revising and generation of the conceptual content do not obtain. The key role in the process of revision of a given system of empirical concepts is played by *contradiction* that obtains between its elements tied to one another via the inferential relations, which in turn originate from the conceptual content generating process guided by the determinations of reflection (identity, difference etc.). But if the given set of determinations does not comprise a self-enclosed autonomous system, but is instead “outwards-going,” then what appears as a contradiction when a given subset of determinations is

considered in isolation does not necessitate the process of revision and generation of new determinations, as the apparent contradiction might be resolved by merely bringing a larger context in the picture. In other words, the necessary conditions for the process of revision and generation of the new content are present only within the constellation of empirical concept that are linked to one another by inferential relations and form a holistic system.

The key point here is that the contradiction and, therefore, the need for revision of the conceptual content have different consequences in the holistic self-enclosed system vs. in a none-self-enclosed set of abstract determinations. When Hegel calls the former “bent inwards” and the latter “pointing outside,” he speaks with the language of spatial metaphors about the nature of the inferential relations that will ultimately determine the developments necessitated by the emergence of contradiction. If in the holistic system, the revision of the existing conceptual content is the only way of resolving the contradictory state with the outward-pointing set of determinations, resolution can be located in the domain external to the given set of determinations.

Here we can see how the two kinds of systems will exhibit radically different patterns of “behavior.” When confronted with cases of contradiction, the former will be directed inwardly on the revision of the existing determinations, generating new conceptual content through the process of thinking (in Hegel’s technical meaning of the term), guided by the formal schema of determinations of reflect. With the latter, no such necessity arises. This absence of the condition for the process of generation

and revision of the determinate conceptual content is what Hegel has in mind when claiming that the abstract universals lack the principle of difference. In other words, the principle of differentiation is the key element that conditions the process of generation of conceptual content that comprise the schemata of the determinations of reflection, and it is realized within the given domain of articulated and yet still further articulable holistic system of empirical concepts. Hence, abstract universals lack this critical feature that is present in the Hegelian notion of universality, rendering the latter—not the former—into a dynamic content-generating process.

#### **3.3.3.1)      *“Fixity” as a Problem of Abstract Universal***

The unavailability of the principle of differentiation in abstract universals is closely tied with their “fixity,” which Hegel sees as a major reason of their inadequacy. “Here we have the circumstance that explains why the understanding is nowadays held in such a low repute and is so much discredited when measured against reason; it is the fixity which it imparts to determinacies and consequently to anything finite. This fixity consists in the form of the abstract universality just considered that makes them unalterable” (WL 610, gio538). What Hegel is pointing to here is the inadequacy of the perspective that takes the particular moment of the concept in its isolation without contextualizing it in the larger picture with the other two moments of the basic transcendental ontological structure of his system. If we abstract from the conceptual content generating process that we have looked at above and exclusively focus on its product, i.e., the constellation of the empirical

concepts as abstract universals, we end up with an inadequate account. This is the case because the dynamic aspect that plays the fundamental role in the generation of the conceptual content is left out of the picture. The point is that we are not dealing merely with an incomplete account with the universal moments omitted from it, but the particular moment itself is misconstrued, as due to the removal of all dynamism it is taken as consisting of the “fixed” or “unalterable” determinations.

The misconstrual of the abstract universals as rigid and unalterable determinations invites the *semantic atomist* perspective, according to which the conceptual content of the empirical concepts are taken to be not the outcome of the process of continuous formation and revision that is taking place through their application in cognition claims and in action, but antecedent and semantically independent of these processes. This semantic indifference can be of a variety of kinds. It can take the form of the Aristotelian-representationalist model, according to which the world and the minds are divided by the ontological gap, and when it come to the epistemological and semantic concerns, the content of the former determines the content of the latter. In other words, the fixed determinations are antecedent in the sense that their content precedes any cognitive effort on the part of the mind; the locus of their origin is the mind-independent realm. An alternative form this semantic indifference can take is the rationalist-Leibnizian approach, according to which the determinations are pre-given not in the mind-external world but in the mental realm itself. This is why Hegel compares the Leibnizian approach to the generation of the conceptual content with formation of bubbles in the mind (WL, II, 10, WL 396).

What both of these alternatives lack is the appreciation of the role that the process of application of the systematically related empirical concepts plays in furnishing their conceptual content. This is what Hegel is pointing out when maintaining that once the universal moment of the concept is included in the picture, the fixity is dissolved and the dynamic character of the transcendental ontological substructure, the *Concepts*, comes to the fore:

The fixity of the determinacies which the understanding appears to run up against, the form of the imperishable, is that of self-referring universality. But this universality belongs to the concept as its own, and for this reason what is found expressed in it, infinitely close at hand, is the dissolution of the finite. This universality directly contradicts the determinateness of the finite and makes explicit its disproportion with respect to it. ... the abstract determinate is posited ... as the unity of itself and the universal, that is, as concept. (WL 611-12; gio540)

### **3.3.4) Identity of Content**

The third aspect of the relation between the universal and the particular moments of the concept concerns the identity of their respective conceptual space. Hegel describes this identity in the above-cited passage as the universal, being the totality of its diversity. By diversity is obviously meant the particular moment of the concept. In the same passage Hegel also maintains that universality is with itself in this diversity. Here we are dealing with the explicit assertion of what has been implied by Hegel's earlier claim of each moment of the concept being not merely a part of the concept but embracing it in its entirety. But the question is how we ought



to think of the identity of the dynamic (the universal) and the static (the particular) moments. It certainly does not mean that there are no characteristics present in either one of these moments that is absent in the other one, as we have just pointed out significant differences between the two. What Hegel has in mind here, rather, is the specific relation between the process through which the determinations are generated on the one hand, and the conceptual content that we end up with as an outcome of this activity. He claims that there is nothing to the conceptual content that has not been originated from the process of its production. This is what has been described by Wilfrid Sellars and his followers as the rejection of the myth of the given.

#### **3.3.4.1)      *Intension identical***

According to the traditional conception, every concept can be analyzed regarding its extensional and intensional aspects. Extension of a concept basically means the domain that is carved out by the concept, thus it includes all other concepts that can be subsumed under it or stand in species-genus relation with the given concept. The intension of a concept, on the other hand, includes the complete set of concepts that are parts of its determination. For example, the extension of the concept of *polygon* includes concepts like triangle, square, rectangle, pentagon, etc. The intension, on the other hand, includes such concepts as line, angle, extension, etc. One way we can think of this distinction is that extension is geared to the ontological import of the concept, while intension to its semantic aspect. Now, when

Hegel claims that the universal moment exhausts the totality of determinations that makes up the particular moment of the concept, what he has in mind is that both the intension and the extension of the conceptual content that make up the particular moment originate from the determination-generating process of reflection that he calls universality.

I shall start with the intensional aspect. In this respect, it is important to recall that the principle of self-differentiation of the universal into the plurality of determinations of the particularity, according to Hegel, is immanent to the universal itself. The “universality ... contains within itself the standard by which this form of self-identity ... [is] pervading and embracing all the moments” (WL 600). As we have seen, the principle under consideration is the principle of differentiation that consists of the basic determinations of reflection that guide the process of generation of conceptual content. Hence, when Hegel claims that the universal determines the nature of its diversification into the determinations that comprise the particular, he is pointing to the grounding role of the basic function of differentiation, identification, diversification, etc. and particularly, as we have seen, contradiction, in the process of generation of the empirical concepts. Hegel’s point here is that no matter at which level of analyzing the given empirical content we start, we will be proceeding with the basic rules of reflection that characterize the universal moment of the concept and will be arriving at the conceptual content that is a product of the application of these very functions. In other words, no matter how far such spelling out of the intensional content is pursued, there is no point at which we arrive at the elements that are given to the universality from a source

external to it. The totality of the particular moment of the concept is mediated by its universal moment through and through. This is what Hegel means in the claims such as these: “particularity has universality within it as its essential being” (WL 608), or “a principle contains the beginning and the essential nature of its development and realization” (WL610). The complete conceptual content of each specific determination and their totality taken together originate from the principle present in universality.

#### **3.3.4.2)      *Extension identical***

The identity of the extension of the two moments of the concept is the other side of the same coin; “by virtue of the identity of the particulars with the universal, their diversity is, as such, universal; it is totality. The particular, therefore, not only contains the universal but through its determinateness also exhibits it; consequently, the universality constitutes the sphere that must exhaust the particular” (WL 606). The process of the generation of the conceptual content, claims Hegel, carves out the onto-logical space within which the products of the particularization of the universal are exhibited. In other words, there is no extra-conceptual content that serves as an external boundary to the determination-generating process. The onto-logical space that is carved out by self-differentiation of the universal is the domain to which the particulars with the totality of their determinations belong.

### **3.3.5) Primacy of universal**

Both intension and extension of the two moments are identical; universality and particularity are two different moments of the very same ontological structure, the totality of which is present in each one of these moments; “each of these moments is no less the whole Concept” (WL 600). Notwithstanding this important aspect of co-extensiveness and the identity of content of the two moments, it should be kept in mind that there is an important difference between them, which shows why Hegel gives the pride of place to the universal moment. While particularity is the only means by which universality actualizes itself as a creative power and hence an indispensable moment of the concept, nevertheless as we have already seen, it is universality that has *the principle of particularization* through which it posits particular determinations. It is also the creative potential of universality that particularity represents, not vice versa.

### **3.3.6) Bowman on two moments of the concept and the limitations of his position**

Having looked at the relation between the universal and the particular moments of the concept, we can see that the overall framework on which the dynamic and the static elements are unified in a self-relational unity at the most fundamental level of Hegel’s transcendental ontological system. A more detailed account of this unity will be taken up in the following chapter, but the basic picture should already be clear: the unity between the dynamic and the static aspects of the

Hegelian transcendental ontology rests on the unified structure of the concept, and specifically on the identity between its universal and particular moments.

Brady Bowman in his *Hegel and the Metaphysics of Absolute Negativity* advances a somewhat similar claim. Drawing on the works of Dieter Henrich and Rolf Peter Horstmann, he claims that “Henrich’s analysis of the dynamic logic of Hegel’s grundoperation turns out to correspond exactly to Horstmann’s relational account of the Hegelian Concept and the structure of subjectivity. The two are at bottom one and the same, considered first from the dynamic perspective, then from the static or structural perspective” (Bowman 2013, 54). Henrich’s analysis of the reflective activity as the autonomous negation that takes the *Doctrine of Essence* as the fundamental kernel of the dynamic account of the Hegelian system is argued by Bowman to have a structure identical to what he sees as Hegel’s notion of the *concept*. Both exhibit the three-partite structure of the “relation-to-self – relation-to-other – relation-to-other-as-relation-to-self” (Bowman 2013, 41). The dynamic manifestation of this structure is presented by Bowman from the Logic of Reflection:

Reflection is at first the movement of the nothing to the nothing, and thus negation coinciding with itself. This self-coinciding is in general simple equality with itself, immediacy. But this falling together is not the transition of negation into equality as into a being other than it; reflection is transition rather as the sublation of transition, for it is the immediate falling together of the negative with itself. And so this coinciding is, first, self-equality or immediacy; but, second, this immediacy is the self-equality of the negative, and hence self-negating equality, immediacy which is in itself the negative, the negative of itself: its being is to be what it is not. The self-reference of the negative is therefore its turning back into itself; it is immediacy as the sublation of the

negative, but immediacy simply and solely as this reference or as turning back from a one, and hence as self-sublating immediacy. – This is positedness, immediacy purely as determinateness or as self-reflecting. This immediacy, which is only as the turning back of the negative into itself, is the immediacy which constitutes the determinateness of shine, and from which the previous reflective movement seemed to begin. But, far from being able to begin with this immediacy, the latter first is rather as the turning back or as the reflection itself. Reflection is therefore the movement which, since it is the turning back, only in this turning is that which starts out or returns. (Bowman 2013, 53; WL 11.250-51; G 347)

The identical structure is to be found in Hegel's theory of the concept, Bowman argues, and presents as an example of this the relation between *identity, difference, and ground*.

While Bowman is right about the dualistic aspect (dynamic and static) of the basic ontological substructure of the Hegelian system, as well as about the identity of these moments, the specific interpretation of these moments and their unity he is advancing is clearly problematic. First, the manifestation of the static structure, *relation-to-self – relation-to-other – relation-to-other-as-relation-to-self*, that Bowman is looking at (*identity, difference, ground*) is taken from the determinations of reflection, not from the doctrine of the concept. Hence, what is presented as the static structure of the concept that corresponds to the identical dynamic structure of the process of reflection as autonomous negativity is borrowed from the determinations of reflection or the dynamic moment itself. In other words, Bowman uses the schema borrowed from the dynamic moment, interprets it as a static structure, and then tries to prove on this basis the parallelism between the two

sides. Unfortunately, Bowman has no choice but to revert to this or some other similar tactics as he is hardly going into the analysis of the *Doctrine of the Concept*, confining his attention to the *Doctrine of Essence*. For sure the *Doctrine of Essence* is important for understanding some of the key aspects of Hegel's transcendental ontology, and as my analysis in Chapter 3 has shown, it is essential for the proper comprehension of the mechanism involved in process of generation of empirical concepts. But at the same time, it is certainly not the place where the thesis of the self-relational unity between the most basic elements of Hegel's ontology (i.e., universality, particularity, individuality) is advanced. Had he paid more careful attention to the pivotal third part of the *Logic*, Bowman would have uncovered the most fundamental ground on which the identity of the dynamic and the static moments in the Hegelian system rests.

As we have seen from the above analysis of the basic structure of the Hegelian transcendental ontology, his theory of the concept, the dynamic aspect of the system is associated with the *universal* moment, which is the activity of the generation and continuous revision of the conceptual content of the empirical determinations. Moreover, as we have seen, this activity is not confined merely to the mental sphere, but also includes the interaction of the individuals in the intersubjective, socially shared space within which the action has no other meaning but the application of concepts. The determinations of reflection that Hegel presents in the doctrine of the essence are the basic formal structures that guide this content-generating activity. Discerning identities, differences, diversity, etc., in the experience that is already mediated by the existing empirical concepts is the most

fundamental operational move in the process through which the revision of the existing and formation of the new empirical determinations are carried out. The *static* aspect of the *concept*, on the other hand, is the totality of this systematically interrelated empirical concept that Hegel calls the *particular*. The identity of the dynamic and the static aspects, that is, the universal and particular moment with the static the particular one that I have shown has the Kantian origins, will be the topic of our discussion in the following chapter where I take a close look at the *Syllogism* section of the doctrine of the concept.

### **3.4) Individuality**

Hegel introduces the third moment of the fundamental structure of his transcendental ontological system, *individuality*, as *determinate universality*: “Individuality, as we have seen, is already posited through particularity; this is determinate universality and hence self-referring determinateness, the determinate determinate” (WL 618.2; G 546), and again, “The particular, for the same reason that makes it only a determinate universal, is also an individual, and conversely, because the individual is a determinate universal, it is equally a particular” (WL 620.2; G 547). These passages make it clear that what he means by individuality should not be identified with the pre-conceptual, brute given, something that is out there in the world individuated prior to any reflection. Instead, individuality stands for something “posited through particularity.” It is, in other words, the outcome of the process of reflection that generates determinate conceptual content. Instead of



being a thing given to the reflection from some external sources, it is individuated by the conceptual content generating process. Individuality, therefore, is the fully mediated totality of relations. This is what Hegel means when he claims that through individuality, concept re-asserts its unity by returning to itself after positing diverse determinations.

in this reflection universality is in and for itself, individuality is essentially the negativity of the determinations of the concept, but not merely as if it stood as a third something distinct from them, but because what is now posited is that positedness is being-in-and-for-itself; that is, what is posited is that each of the distinct determinations is the totality. The turning back of the determinate concept into itself means that its determination is to be in its determinateness the whole concept. (WL 621.1; G548)

Individuality is the totality of determinations that make up a systematically related whole—not any set of determinate conceptual content will qualify for the term. This is why Hegel introduces the example of the already familiar concrete universals, “Life, spirit, God, as well as the pure concept” when describing individuality. What is capable of being individuated is not a singular object confronting consciousness externally, but a totality of objects internally related to one another due to the systematic relations present in the conceptual content on which they are grounded. Hence, a finite object enters a given onto-logical space as a part of a totality of objects with which it shares the basic conceptual content, and it is this totality that is individuated. Only certain systematically related totalities can be considered fully individuated, that is, to present an articulated system of conceptual content related by inferential commitments and doxastic claims about

the reality that can be described as autonomous that is not depending on any external conditions. In this passage, Hegel clearly specifies the problem with the traditional take on individuality.

Universality, when referred to these individuals as indifferent ones – and it must be referred to them, for they are a moment of the concept of individuality – is only their commonality. If by the universal one understands that which is common to several individuals, the indifferent subsistence of these individuals is then taken as the starting point, thus mixing in the immediacy of being into the determination of the concept. The lowest conception one can have of the universal as connected with the individual is this external relation that it has to the latter as a mere commonality. (WL 621.4; G 549)

The independent subsistence of the individuals is the illusion that is associated with the matching conception of the abstract universality, which Hegel describes as its “lowest conception.” In other words, the conception of individual objects as existing indifferently from one another as well as from the universal is a fundamentally flawed one; objects are individuated together and via the conceptual content posited through the process of universalization.

As such, individuality is inseparable from concrete universality and this is what sets apart the latter from the abstract universality, which is related to the individuality externally:

The universal is for itself because it is absolute mediation in itself, self-reference only as absolute negativity. It is an abstract universal inasmuch as this sublating is an external act and so a dropping off of the determinateness. This negativity, therefore, attaches indeed to the abstract universal, but it remains outside

it, as a mere condition of it; it is the abstraction itself that holds its universal opposite it, and so the universal does not have singularity in itself and remains void of concept. – Life, spirit, God, as well as the pure concept, are for this reason beyond the grasp of abstraction, for abstraction keeps singularity away from its products, and singularity is the principle of individuality and personality. And so it comes to nothing but lifeless universalities, void of spirit, color, and content. (WL 619.2)

In other words, what makes the abstract universal “lifeless” is not its externality to the immediate sensible given, but its externality to the totality of determinations, its “dropping off of the determinateness” thereby becoming “void of ... content.”

### **3.5) Against Representationalist Model**

Hegel associates the approach that takes the moments of the concept in isolation from one another with *representational thinking*. On the one hand, the representational model itself sets apart the concept and the object on the opposite ends of the epistemological and ontological gap, abstract universality on the one hand and the individuality on the other. But for Hegel, all three moments of the concept taken in isolation from the rest of the concept are abstractions. Hence, not only can the universal and the particular be abstract, but so can the individual. Representational thinking is working with such an abstract notion of individuality when postulating it as a singular standing outside of reflection, as something that is given to thought. This way of thinking can be captured by a certain inadequate ontological model:

each of the determinations established in the preceding exposition of the concept has immediately dissolved itself and has lost itself in its other. Each distinction is confounded in the course of the very reflection that should isolate it and hold it fixed. Only a way of thinking that is merely representational, for which abstraction has isolated them, is capable of holding the universal, the particular, and the singular rigidly apart. Then they can be counted; and for a further distinction this representation relies on one which is entirely external to being, on their quantity, and nowhere is such a distinction as inappropriate as here. (WL 620.4; G 548)

The representationalist stance therefore implies an ontological model that conceives the three moments of the concept as self-sufficient determinations persisting in isolation from one another. We shall see that this stands quite close to one of the alternative ontological models that Hegel will consider and reject in the *Syllogism* chapter.

Hegel describes two alternative options available to us for relating the particular and the universal moments in order to restore the unified structure of the concept; he calls these “return of the concept into itself” (WL 621.1). The first option is based on abstraction, “which lets drop the particular and rises to the higher and higher genus.” This option uses the impoverished conception of universality that operates within the representationalist framework, keeping and widening the gap between the universal on the one hand and the individual on the other. It is “the lowest conception one can have of the universal in its connexion with the individual is this external relation” (WL 621).

The alternative option is via “descent” into individuality (WL 619). This descending of the universal into individuality does not mean putting aside the

particular moment and delving into the non-conceptual given. Rather, it means the drive toward exhaustive determination of totality through generation of an interdependent system of conceptual content. It is through this drive toward full determination that the totality of the content individuates itself or enters actuality: "But the individuality is not only the return of the Concept into itself, but immediately its loss. Through individuality, where the Concept is internal to itself, it becomes external to itself and enters into actuality" (WL 621).

## CHAPTER 5: Syllogism as the Basic Ontological Schema of Hegel's Transcendental Ontology

### 1) The Syllogism

The main goal of the present chapter is to give an account of the inner structure of *the concept*, which Hegel sees as the fundamental ontological schema of reality. Up to this point in describing this structure, I have outlined the basic features of the three moments that the *concept* is made up of: universality, particularity, and individuality. But this is insufficient for the proper understanding of the Hegelian notion of the *concept*. What is needed in addition to the account of the moments is to spell out the exact character of their relation to one another. In examining the moments in isolation, we tend to regard them as *self-subsistent* elements and thus downplay their key characteristic of being integral parts of the holistic structure within which all three moments are completely mediated with one another. One way to appreciate the extent of originality of Hegel's position is to attend to the fact that, if in the traditional view only universals are the products of abstraction from actuality, for Hegel taking particularity and individuality in isolation are abstractions as well. To regard actuality as consisting of merely individual entities (or any given system of particular determinations) is to uphold

just as impoverished a view of actuality as with ignoring the individuality altogether.

The section of the text where Hegel investigates the splitting of the concept into its three components is the *Judgment* chapter, in which he states that “the judgment is the self-diremption of the Concept” (WL 625). The *Syllogism* chapter, on the other hand, is dedicated to the reconstitution of its unity. This reconstitution, however, does not cancel the difference between the separate moments of the concept; rather, it is a sublation of the difference, not an abolition of it. In other words, it is not the difference between the moments of the concept that is undermined in the *Syllogism* chapter, but the opposition between the difference and the unity. A close study of the *Syllogism* chapter is important not only for exposing the nature of unity between the constitutive parts of the concept, but also for clarifying the meaning of each one of the three elements. For example, as we shall see, the notion of universality with which the *Syllogism* chapter commences is a mere abstract universality, hence very different from the Hegelian meaning of the term as the conceptual content generating process guided by the determinations of reflection we have looked at in Chapter 3. Universality is also not an exception; each one of the three moments undergoes transformation as we make our way through the stages of mediation presented by Hegel as syllogistic structures.

Thus, the *Syllogism* chapter includes not one but a whole series of different schemata of mediation between the moments of the concept, and each model is distinct from others not only in the specific manner of unity of universality,

particularity, and individuality, but also in the very nature of the moments that are being mediated. The progression is from a less adequate model to increasingly more successful ones, ultimately culminating in Hegel's own vision of the immanently mediated structure of the concept—the fundamental schema of his transcendental ontology. But before arriving there, he takes us through the complex twists and turns of different stages of syllogistic mediation, examining and leaving behind alternative ontological outlooks. As we make our way through these models, I will be pointing out the key features of the basic ontological assumption lying in the background of each major stage of the development. This should serve a double function: on the one hand, it will clarify the trajectory of the overall progression taking place in the *Syllogism* chapter by mapping Hegel's complex technical vocabulary onto more easily accessible and familiar theories; and on the other hand, it will help in understanding what Hegel sees as the most philosophically significant differences between his ontological view and the available alternatives, as well as the superiority of the former over the latter ones.

### **1.1) Self-relational Structure as the Criterion and Pippin's Epistemological Reading**

The criterion that drives the development of the *Syllogism* chapter is the self-relational unity of the immanent structure of the *concept*. The moments of the concept, as we shall see, ought to be not merely related to one another, but their relation should have the nature of *self-relation*. This is the norm Hegel uses to



evaluate the ontological models he investigates in the *Syllogism* chapter, the norm that each one of the alternative models will fail to meet, rendering Hegel's own stance superior to them in his own eyes. The fact that Hegel is using this criterion reveals how thoroughly Kantian his undertaking is, as it is Kant who identified the objective purport conferring functions with the self-relationality when in the Transcendental Deduction identified the logical functions of judgment with the transcendental apperception. Hence, the self-relational structure under consideration is clearly the Kantian transcendental apperception recast into Hegel's own technical vocabulary and integrated into his ontological system.

Hence, when Hegel makes claims like “everything actual is syllogism” or “syllogism is the truth of being,” he has in mind not the entire *Syllogism* chapter, where a whole series of ontological models is presented and analyzed, but the fully mediated syllogistic schema that is attained at the end of the chapter—the stage at which the Kantian self-relationality criterion is fulfilled. While emphasizing this deeply running Kantian current at the epicenter of Hegel's project, it is important to keep in mind that we are dealing here not with an epistemological project, but with a transcendental *ontology*—a theory of actuality, the fundamental schema or reality. The Kantian idea of the transcendental unity of apperception as the source of objective purport-conferring determinations is fundamentally reworked and reinstated on a new ontological ground that is free of the psychological implications that Hegel saw as problematic. The self-relational unity is still the source of objective purport, but the epistemological account is replaced by the Hegelian transcendental ontology.

As I have argued in Chapter 1, the Kantian origins of the project, instead of precluding its reading as an ontological theory, sets us on the path of advancing a new kind of ontology that constitutes a kind of paradigm shift from its traditional precursors. This emphasis on the ontological nature of the theory under consideration is what sets my reading apart from Robert Pippin's position. While discussing the *Concept* chapter of Hegel's logic, Pippin draws a line between the "good" Kantian current in Hegel's position from a "waxing Platonic" theme that he considers to be peripheral to it.

When he wants to talk like a Kantian, Hegel claims that 'the Notion' comprises the major categories of the Logic itself, being and essence (e.g. at EL, 307; EnL 223). This is, as we have seen, the major line of attack in SL. Following it means that the basic claim is: For there to be any possible judgment about objects, there must be possible an original determinacy, a pure discrimination presupposed prior to any empirical or specific judgmental discrimination.... All of this leads to Hegel's basic claim that the originally required qualitative determinacy itself ultimately depends on (in some sense) subjectively projected theories ... This is the basic, stripped down version of Hegel's idealist case for the required Notion interdependence of being and essence. (Pippin 1989, 241-242).

Pippin traces the Kantian thread in Hegel through the need of contextualization of the categories of being and essence within the theory of the concept. Here Pippin is putting his finger on the central nerve of the Kant-Hegel relation, but I'm skeptical of whether this necessarily commits us to the thesis of the "subjectively projected" content onto reality. Does not Pippin's thesis assert the dependence of the categories of being on essence and ultimately on the concept? And if this is the case,

does not this thesis contradict with his claim about the *subjective projection*, which assumes the bipolar picture of the subject and actuality on which the subjective content is being projected? If the *concept* grounds the categories of being, then there is no being independent of concept onto which the “subjective projection” would have been possible.

Pippin continues to expose what he sees as a darker side of Hegel’s position:

But as just noted, Hegel is happy to go far beyond what is, in essence, his own reconstitution of the Kantian categories of quality, quantity, relation, and modality. And he is often also given to waxing Platonic about such Notions. He claims that “man” is a Notion in the relevant technical sense, and he praises Christianity for first treating man in terms of his Notion.... It would indeed be odd if the transcendental-logical requirements for a conceptual scheme could develop in a way that would not only have consequences for how man might be defined, or accounted for, but could actually provide the definition. (Pippin 1989, 242)

Pippin is absolutely right in drawing the line between Kant and Plato and positing “the good Hegel” on the Kant side of the divide. Where I disagree with him is confining the domain of ontology to the Plato side of the divide. Hegel is indeed advancing a theory of transcendental-logical schema about how *man* or any particular determination can be defined, but this does not limit his project to merely an epistemological one. And going beyond this does not imply that he is advocating for any specific definition of *man* or any other particular determination. Hegel’s transcendental ontology is not concerned with producing definitions of essences along the lines of Platonic forms, but with the ontological implication of the very same transcendental-logical schema that Pippin so exemplarily outlines in his book.

Having given up the traditional idea of the transcendent being and the corresponding representation in thought, Hegel is advancing a theory of *being* as *thought* and *thought* as *being* that is grounded on the ontological schema elaborated in the theory of the *concept*. In other words, “the active universal,” as a creative power that Pippin acknowledges as the key element of Hegel’s position (Pippin1989, 237-239), is not merely a process of reflection with strictly epistemological function, or a meaning-generating power with merely semantic purport, but a determination-furnishing process within which the identity of being and thought is actualized.

## **2) The Syllogism of Existence**

### **2.1) The Qualitative Syllogism**

Hegel presents three groups of syllogistic mediational models: the Syllogism of Existence, the Syllogism of Reflection, and the Syllogism of Necessity. The first model in the Syllogism of Existence, i.e., the Qualitative Syllogism, has the following structure: Individual — Particular — Universal. The defining feature of this initial form of mediation is that “each [moment] is present in its *immediate* determinateness” (WL 667). Immediate determinateness for Hegel means endogenous content—being determined without reference to anything else. However, this is a problematic notion because, for him, conferral of a content is

possible only by simultaneously excluding some other possible content, and any determination for Hegel implies negation. Therefore, immediate determination is a mere *illusion of determination* and each one of the three moments of the syllogistic structure under consideration is fundamentally misconstrued. “The *individuality* is any immediate concrete object; *particularity* a single one of its determinatenesses, properties or relationships; *universality* again a still more abstract, more individual determinateness in the particular” (WL 670). Each one of the three definitions is problematic. As we have already seen, *individuality*, conceived as “any immediate concrete object,” ignores the role of the universal as the determination-conferring power that makes individuation of entities possible. In the present syllogism, the individuality is taken to be as given prior to conceptualization—the paradigm example of the myth of the given.

The *particular* and the *universal* moments are just as misconstrued. They are taken to be as merely different degrees of abstraction from the *individuality*—the “immediate concrete object.” This for Hegel means regarding the entire mediational structure of the concept as standing on its head and his verdict for the first Syllogism of Existence is complete failure to mediate between the moments of the concept, which stems from misunderstanding of their nature.

In the first syllogism, the syllogism’s objective significance is only superficially present, since in it the determinations are not yet posited as the unity which constitutes the essence of the syllogism. It is still subjective in so far as the abstract significance possessed by its terms is not thus isolated in and for itself but only in subjective consciousness. (WL 667).

Thus, the ontological model presented in the first syllogism is inadequate to do justice to Hegel's Kantian criterion of *self-relational unity*. Not only does it fail to present an account of the structure of the concepts in which each moment is related to itself within the other two moments, but it cannot even present any account of unity between them requiring an external element—subjective reflection—for it. The mediation is accomplished not within the logical space of the concept but through the subjective reflection standing external to it. Hegel concludes that the first schema of mediation fails to function as a genuine syllogism, as "its ground and seat" is not the determinate middle term "which is pregnant with content" but "only subjective reflection" (WL 668-669).

## 2.2) The Second Syllogism

The principle that governs the emergence of each new stage in the series of syllogistic mediation after the downfall of the preceding one is *determinate negation*. The idea behind this important conceptual tool is that the culminating point of a given model is a determinate indicator of the form that its successor model will have. In the specific case of transition from the first to the second Syllogism of Existence, the key role is played by the realization of the individuality as the locus of the mediation under consideration: "the truth of the first qualitative syllogism is that something is united with a qualitative determinateness as a universal, not in and for itself but through a contingency or in an *individuality*" (WL 674). The model of mediation that emerges from the downfall of the first syllogism ought to do

justice to *the truth* of the first syllogism, hence it has to grant the key role in mediation to the individuality: “In such a quality, the subject of the syllogism has not returned into its Concept, but is apprehended only in its externality; immediacy constitutes the ground of the relation and consequently the mediation; thus the individuality is in truth the middle term” (WL 674).

### **2.2.1) Middle Term’s Special Function and the Problems of the Second Syllogism**

Before looking closely at the second syllogistic model, it is important to note that the middle term plays a special role not only for the present model, but also for the ontological structures presented by Hegel in the *Syllogism* chapter in general: “The essential feature of the syllogism is the unity of the extremes, the middle term which unites them, and the ground which supports them” (WL 665). The middle term at each stage of development of the syllogistic mediational models stands for the element through which the purported unity between the moments is attained; it is the ground of mediation. But clearly, as we progress through the series of models, this ground does not remain the same. It undergoes transformation that reflects not only the modification of the formal structure of the syllogism, but also the change taking place in the extremes. Thus, the middle term is the key element of each stage of mediation where the developments taken place in the preceding mediational models get cemented.

Thus, if the truth of the first syllogism was that mediation was accomplished via the individuality, as Hegel claims in the above-cited passage, and granted his principle of *determinate negation* and the centrality of the middle term for mediational models, in the second Syllogism of Existence we should have the individuality as the middle term. The new syllogism, therefore, has the following form: Universality — Individuality — Particularity. However, the progress it makes, compared to the previous model in successfully mediating the moments of the concept, is quite modest. The reasons for this failure are several. To begin with, both major and minor premises of the new syllogistic model are insufficiently mediated. The former (Universality — Individuality) is an outcome of the first Syllogism of Existence that, as we know, was an unsuccessful attempt at unifying the terms, basing the mediation on a mere subjective, external reflection. Due to this insufficient form of mediation, the universality and the individuality are still abstract determinations posited as independent of each other, as well as of the particularity. The latter, the minor premise ( Individuality — Particularity ), stands on an even more shallow ground than the former, as it lacks even that inadequate form of mediation that has been attempted in the case of the major premise. In other words, the *subjective-consciousness*-based, and thus defective, form of mediation that was in place between the terms of the major premise is lacking here. Also, clearly the mere abstract determinateness of the terms is still not overcome yet— while particularity has already acquired some content (although an externally imposed one) due to it having served as the middle term of the previous syllogism, individuality still remains a completely abstract determination. Therefore, the



second model of the Syllogism of Existence also fails to carry out an adequate mediation and posit the unified logical structure of the concept.

While relating the first Syllogism of Existence to the second one, Hegel writes: “the mediation of the first syllogism was *in itself* a contingent one; in the second syllogism this contingency is *posited*” (WL 677). This “*in itself*” contingency is certainly related to basic ontological assumptions of the first syllogistic model. As all three moments were declared to be self-sufficient, there was no presence of an *immanent* mediation between them. In other words, the particular moment related to the given individual via external reflection (which, as we have seen, is the ground of mediation) was not immanent to the individual itself. The particular was just as self-sufficient as the individual, or as Hegel would put it, they are *indifferent* to one another. Therefore, the particular abstract determination that was associated with the given individuality was in principle not determined by the individuality, hence contingent. Moreover, since the universality in the first mediational model was conceived (or rather misconceived) as “a still more abstract” determination, the same indifferent relation obtains between it and the particular moment. Therefore, we end up with the possibility of attributing to the individuality not only the determinations that didn’t belong to it, but even mutually contradictory properties. Depending on which middle term was used (and due to the logical distance between it and the other two terms, any determination that is externally relatable to the extremes could be used here), we would end up with attributing contradictory properties to the very same individual.

It appears that all the elements of contingency of mediation were already there in the first syllogism. If that is indeed the case, why is Hegel describing it as contingent only “in itself”? What makes this contingency “posited” in the second and not in the first mediational model? The answer here lies in the corresponding formal structures of the syllogisms. The first mediation, I—P—U, as far as its formal structure is concerned, does not reveal the contingency at hand. Individuality is subsumed under general determination, which is further subsumed under determination of even more higher order of generality. In the second syllogism, on the other hand, contingency is already posited in the formal structure of mediation itself as the ground of mediation there is individuality. The middle term, individuality, is subsumed in both the major and the minor premises (WL676), hence the two arbitrarily picked determinations that external reflection related to the given individual will end up being linked to each other. As Hegel laconically puts it, “If the conclusion in the second figure ... is correct, then it is so because it is so on its own account, not because it is the conclusion of this syllogism” (WL 676).

Since the middle term is the ground of mediation in the syllogistic models, it also reflects the level of development achieved at each stage. Here is how Hegel describes the ground of mediation of the present syllogistic model: “*Immediate individuality* is determined in an infinitely manifold and external manner. In it, therefore, is rather posited the self-*external* mediation” (WL 677). The claim that the immediate individuality relates extreme terms through “self-external” mediation refers to the above-mentioned point by Hegel about mediation via subjective consciousness. The idea is that the particular moment on the one hand and the

universal on the other are determining the middle terms “in an infinitely manifold and external manner;” they are the abstract determination under which the subjective reflection subsumes the individual. While individuality is still *immediate*, determination will necessarily be both external and infinitely manifold, since the lack of self-mediation dictates that the external-subjective reflection be required for determination and this external perspective brings along with it infinite variability of the features that can be ascribed to the individual. Therefore, neither this specific model of mediation nor any other one that is grounded on an inadequately determined middle term can present a successful account of unified structure of the concept.

The externality of the mediation we encounter in the present model results in its ultimate failure, but at the same time just with the previous stage it shows the way forward. Since the real ground for the mediation in the second syllogism has been revealed to be external to the middle term, and as Hegel reminds us at this stage of development that “the externality of the individuality is the universality” (WL 677), it is the universal moment that comes to the fore as the new ground for mediation. This realization of the central role that universality has to play this function is one of the most important developments that have taken place up to this point in the *Syllogism* chapter. There is a long way to go before we reach the point of sufficiently developed ontological model wherein the role of universality as a “free creative power” establishing unity within the logical structure of the concept by mediating its different elements fully manifests itself, but the first step toward it is already taken here. And even though universality itself at this stage is still the

abstract universal, hence incapable of fulfilling its function, the very fact of it being placed at the epicenter of mediating is already a significant step forward.

### **2.3) The Third Syllogism**

The third Syllogism of Existence in which individuality is mediated with particularity through universality (I—U—P) has a significant advantage over the previous two forms of mediation: both premises, Particularity—Universality and Individuality—Universality, have already been mediated in the previous syllogisms. Hence, the third syllogism, in some sense, carries out a successful mediation of the three moments of the concept, as both premises have already been established. Having said this, we should keep in mind that all three moments are still inadequately developed and the unity between them is based on “self-external” “mere subjective reflection.” In other words, neither in the case of the particular, nor in the case of the individual, has universality been mediated in its own right. As Hegel puts it, “the extremes are not contained in the middle term according to their essential determinateness” (WL 678). As such, although formally both premises have already been established, they have been established on proper grounds and we are still dealing with mere abstractions that require external reflection to be related to one another.

At this point, it has become clear that the fundamental ontological commitment that frames the entire development of the Syllogism of Existence is the existence of two types of entities: on the one hand, individuals or the spatiotemporal

objects that can be described as concrete particulars (obviously in non-Hegelian understanding of the term) that we encounter through experience; and on the other hand, the abstract entities that are often understood as including such things as properties, numbers, relations, laws of nature, etc. These two kinds of entities within the given ontological model are declared to be “self-sufficient,” not depending for their existence on each other. There is of course also the third element that plays the key role in mediating between the individuals and abstract entities—subjective reflection or external reflection. But this third moment is more an external element problem than an integral part of the ontological model under consideration. Without the subjective reflection, you cannot have the mediation between the elements of the given ontological model; but with the subjective element in it, you no longer have the ontological model in its pure form, as it cannot be described as belonging to either one of the moments. This is the reason Hegel describes the mediation carried out through it as “self-external.”

### **2.3.1) Plato and Stern**

The dualistic model with abstract-universal vs. individual-spatiotemporal entities, which frames the entire development of the Syllogism of Existence, clearly has much in common with Platonic metaphysics. The realm of forms, or that of being vs. the realms of sensible entities, or that of becoming is mirrored in the opposition between the abstract determination, on the one hand, and sensible individuality on the other hand in the Syllogism of Existence. The two domains are juxtaposed and contrasted as existing independently from one another. It is not only that the model under consideration is upholding the one-over-many conception of the relation

between the universal and the individual, but it also grants to them ontological “self-sufficiency.” Hegel’s own conception of *universality*, as we have seen in the previous chapter (and which will be realized at the end of the *Syllogism* chapter), rejects both of these aspects of the view under consideration. Hence, I agree with Stern when he claims that for Hegel “the substance universals which constitute the nature of the individual qua individual do not exist in the abstract, but only as particularized through property universals, and thus as instantiated in the form of individuals.” So Stern is right in his conclusion that, according to Hegel, “Plato is false” (Stern 2009, 157), but he is following Hegel only halfway.

While acknowledging the rejection of the ontological self-sufficiency of the universals, Stern does not do justice to the extent to which Hegel departs from Plato. He wants to ascribe to Hegel a conception of the universal, which, while no longer ontologically independent from the individuals in which it is instantiated, still stands in one-to-many relation to them as their substance which constitutes their nature. He ultimately ascribes to Hegel an Aristotelian position by internalizing the very same rigid Platonic universal within the individual and rendering the latter into manifestation of these “concrete,” immanent universals. “A rose is not an individual rose by virtue of exemplifying the abstract universal ‘red,’ whereas it is an individual rose by virtue of exemplifying the concrete universal ‘rose’” (Stern 2009, 156). This way, Hegel’s distinction between the abstract and genuine conceptions of universality is reduced by Stern to a trivial distinction between mere property of a thing vs. its essential nature, along the lines of the Aristotelian distinction between accidents vs. substantial form. But as we have seen in the

previous chapter and as the further development of the *Syllogism* chapter shall confirm, the Hegelian conception of universality is much more interesting and unorthodox than this. The universal moment of the concept, instead of being reduced to any determinateness (in Stern's interpretation this is determination of essential abstract universal that stands in one-to-many relation to its individuations internally structuring them), is the process of generations of determinations. Instead of being an abstract universal internalized into individual as its immanent but still abstract universal structure, it is the activity that produces the determinations and the condition for individuation of entities through them. Stern even cites the passages in which Hegel is explicit about this: "the universality here is no longer a form external to the content, but the true form which produces the content from itself" (Stern 2009, 154 from SL603-604). But Stern clearly thinks of Hegel's stance as too far off from common sense, and he ultimately sticks to a domesticated version of Hegel's position that is closer to Plato's student Aristotle's conception of the universality than to Hegel's own.

Rejecting conceptual Platonism does not necessitate committing oneself to conceptual Aristotelianism, and neither is Aristotle's substantial form the only option in making Hegel's technical vocabulary accessible to contemporary readers. Hegel, together with rejecting Plato, is also leaving Aristotle behind. Both Platonic and Aristotelian positions have one fundamental thing in common: the order of reality is given. In the former case, the order of reality is given as the rational structure of the world that can be grasped directly independently of the experience, while in the latter it is given both as the immanent structure of the experienced

world and the formal logico-rational principles of the mind (and somehow these two are supposed to be in harmony with each other). Now Hegel takes a fundamentally different stance from both of them; for him, the order, instead of being given, is generated. This of course does not mean that individual subjects somehow construct the world as it pleases them. Instead, it is a collective activity of social practices which includes applications of concepts, social institutions, and guiding individuals' actions, acquiring doxastic claims from experiences and drawing inferences from them, attempting to reconcile these newly acquired claims with the ones already upheld, and through this process generating the content through which we relate to the world. This is what Hegel means when claiming in the passage cited by Stern that "the universality here is no longer a form external to the content, but the true form which produces the content from itself" (Stern 2009, 154; SL603-604).

While the exteriority of the moments to one another modeled after Platonic metaphysics is the defining feature of the Syllogism of Existence, the development that has taken place through the three forms of mediation we examined sets the stage for the reduction of the onto-logical gap between the moments of the concept. As has been pointed out, the third syllogism offers a flawed (since it is based on external reflection) but still a formally complete mediation of the moments, granted the two earlier mediations are presupposed. But the same can be said about the earlier syllogisms. "It[the third syllogism] presupposes the first two syllogisms; but conversely, they both presuppose it, and in general each presupposes the other two" (WL 678). Thus, each one of the three syllogisms considered so far can be regarded



as presupposing the other two, and all three together form a full circle of purely formal mediation. This brings us to the point where the qualitative differences between the three Syllogisms of Existence and, more importantly, the terms themselves, lose their significance—as long as the other two terms have also been the grounds of mediations and these mediations are presupposed, it does not make much difference which moment of the concept is presently the middle term. Hence, we are standing at the threshold of a new important development where the qualitative differences between the moments are put aside (the next model has the form U-U-U) and the first step is taken toward building up of their shared content.

#### **2.4) The Fourth Syllogism of Existence: the Mathematical Syllogism**

The last form of mediation in the Syllogisms of Existence is the Mathematical Syllogism: Universal-Universal-Universal. It has a somewhat paradoxical character. On the one hand, abstraction has reached its highest point, as the mathematical syllogism abstracts from all qualitative distinctions between the terms. This also transforms the modality of relation between the terms, which as we shall see will have far-reaching consequences, as it can no longer be inherence or subsumption, instead it is *equality* (WL 679). The kind of mediation that the mathematical syllogism offers is possible only on the basis of complete abstraction from the specific determination of each one of the three terms. “Lines, figures, posited as equal to one another, are understood only in terms of their magnitude; a triangle is

affirmed to be equal to a square, but not as triangle to square, but only in regard to magnitude, etcetera”(WL 680). Abstractness that has been the main problem of the moments of the concept in the Syllogism of Existence, when pushed to its limits, breaks down the given framework and takes us to a new stage of mediation. Although minimal, shared content is nevertheless established between the term: “abstract determinateness has had *its other posited* in it and thereby has become *concrete*” (WL 680). The quantitative equality between the three terms is attained through pushing abstraction from the qualitative element to its limit and although minimal, genuine unity between the terms of the syllogism is attained for the first time. The content that is equal in each of the three terms is posited internally with each term’s own resources—the area of triangle that equals the area of square has this and such area independent of square or any other shape that it is united with—hence the ground of unity between the terms is internal to each term. We have “the positive reflection of one [term] into the other” (WL 681).

What lies ahead in the subsequent mediational models is that the minimal shared content between the terms that has been attained so far will be further developed to the point of embracing the terms completely. If the central principle of the first phase (Syllogisms of Existence) of mediation was the self-sufficiency of the moments of the concept, the second phase (Syllogisms of Reflection) is driven by a new principle—generation by each moment the content of the other two moments internally to itself. Hence, if in the Syllogisms of Existence the two basic ontological categories (abstract universals and the sensible individuals) were posited as self-sufficient entities with content autonomous from one another, the new development

is geared to overcoming the ontological gap between the content immanent to the universal and individuals. This is a first significant step of the overall development taking place in the *Syllogism* chapter that can be described as rejecting the Platonic theory of the origin of conceptual content. The thesis of equality of the three moments brings forth a qualitatively new model of mediation between them. Universal determination is no longer completely external to the individual and what transpires within the individual is also relevant for the universal. An important part of the Platonic presupposition of the externality of the universal was the immutability of its content, but if now they are equated to and put in place of the other moments of the concept, their immutability is also undermined. Ultimately, pursuing this strategy will lead us to the incorporation of the conceptual content of the universals within the practices of their application. Hegel is leaving behind the Platonic account of the conceptual content and heading toward a dynamic theory of generation of the determinate content, within which the process of application of concepts, drawing inferences from this application, added new bits of inferential content via experience. These are the processes thorough which this very content is generated and made accessible for us.

### 3) The Syllogism of Reflection

#### 3.1) The Syllogism of Allness

The first form of mediation in the Syllogism of Reflection is the Syllogism of Allness. It has the same formal structure as the initial model of the Syllogism of Existence, I—P—U. However, as we shall see, the formal similarity is far outweighed by the differences found in the content of the terms. While in the first Syllogism of Existence the middle term was a mere abstract determination, in the present form of mediation it is the totality of the individuals falling under the given particular: “it[the middle term] contains (1) individuality, but (2) individuality extended to universality as *all*” (WL 687). Hegel brings the following inference in order to demonstrate the ontological model under consideration: “All men are mortal / Gaius is a man / therefore Gaius is mortal.” Instead of an arbitrary determination as the middle term of the syllogistic structure, now we have the particular (in this case, “men”) under which all individual men are subsumed. The externality between the terms is replaced by the inclusion of one moment within another.

This inclusion of the other two moments of the concept within the middle term is a step taken toward the generation of determinate content internally to the middle term. Hegel writes, “The syllogism of allness is the syllogism of *understanding* in its perfection, but is as yet no more than that. That the middle term in it is not abstract particularity but developed into its moments and is therefore an essential requirement for the Concept” (WL 687). As we know, Hegel distinguishes

between *understanding* and *reason* as between fixed and mechanical way of thinking vs. fluid and dynamic power that remolds and redefines the fixed determinations that the understanding confines itself to. Hence, the claim that the Syllogism of Allness is “the syllogism of understanding in its perfection” is pointing us to the nature of determination that is in place in the present model of mediation and allows us to see its limitations.

The major advantage of the Syllogism of Allness over the Syllogisms of Existence is that the complete abstractness of the moments of the concept is left behind, but the determinate content we have in the present stage is still in rudimentary form. The power of universal as the fluid determination generating force has not been integrated in the mediation yet. Thus, although the middle term—the particular moment of the concepts—is “not abstract,” it has content of its own and through this content is related to the individuals on the one hand and to the universal (as to a determination of a higher abstraction) on the other; the immanent content generated is still underdeveloped. At the same time, even this rudimentary form of determination overcomes the difficulties we have encountered in the Syllogism of Existence; for instance, the problem of attributing contradictory universals to an individual that haunted the Syllogism of Existence is no longer there. In the first Syllogism of Existence, we were dealing with the problem of contingency because the middle term there was a mere abstract quality, hence mutually contradictory abstract universals could be related to the same individual depending on which abstract determination was chosen as the mediating term. In the present mediational model this is no longer possible, as Hegel explains: “since

the middle term has the determination of *allness*, it contains the greenness or regularity as a *concrete*, which just for that reason is not the abstraction of something merely green or merely regular; with this concrete then only those predicates can be connected which confirm to the totality of the concrete thing" (WL 688).

In the present ontological model, the process of reciprocal infiltration of the moments of the concept is well on its way, but the method that is used for it is still inadequate: "the single determinations still form the bases of the universality of reflection that embraces them within itself; in other words, allness is still not the universality of the Concept but the external universality of reflection" (WL 687). The unification that is attained in the middle term is still only an externally imposed unity of a set of abstract individuals and an abstract universal. The nature of unification we are dealing with here can be extrapolated from Hegel's use of the terms "reflection" (in the passage just quoted) and "understanding" (in an earlier cited passage) when referring to the present form of mediation. As already mentioned, Hegel distinguished understanding from reason and associated the former with Kant's position. What rendered the Kantian stance problematic in Hegel's eye was its inability to go beyond the rigid determinations of thought, whether it referred to the systematization of the empirical knowledge in the inferentially related rational structure (the Kantian reason within the theoretical domain) or the practical reason's alleged capacity to determine the will, that is, to give it a determinate content (the Kantian reason within the practical domain). This rigidity can be exhibited both in the form of relating given abstract determination to

other abstract determinations or in applying the given determination to individuals aiming at subsuming them and thus unifying them under it. In the former case, we have a fixed interrelation of abstract determinations, in the latter case the rigid structure is imposed on empirical realm. For Hegel this form of mediation is flawed, as it takes the determination present in the middle term and projected to the extremes as the only ground of unity between them.

What is needed is a better grounded unity between the mediated terms, a unity that stems from within them, rather than one that is externally imposed. Therefore, the next form of syllogism will be geared to establishing immanent unity between individuality and universality. The middle term of the second Syllogism of Reflection will have individuality as a collective individuality, comprised of the complete set of individuals falling under the given universal. Since universality will have the key function in the formation of the middle term as a collective individuality, there is a sense in which universality becomes immanent to individuality.

### **3.2) The Syllogism of Induction**

In the Syllogism of Induction, which has the form of Universality — Individuality — Particularity, the middle term is “individuality as *complete*,” and the individual term is a collectivity of entities that share the given universal in common. The other extreme is the “immediate *genus* as it is found in the middle term of the preceding syllogism or in the subject of the universal judgment, and which is

exhausted in all the individuals or species collectively of the middle term” (WL 689). As the middle term is the essential part of syllogistic mediation in general, it is important to note a significant transformation that has taken place here compared to the previous syllogisms, specifically regarding the way the middle term integrates different moments of the concept. If in the Syllogism of Allness we had as the middle term the particular determination, conjoining multiplicity of individuals under itself, now we have an individuality so crafted that it encapsulates universality instead of being merely externally related to it. This relation between the moments of the concept already has some resemblance with Hegel’s overall vision of the ontological structure of the *concept* and the nature of its elements’ mediated unity. The universality is made into an immanent, structuring element of the individuality, and as we shall see, this development will further deepen in the subsequent forms of mediation.

The Syllogism of Induction occupies a special place in the second stage mediational models presented as the Syllogisms of Reflection, as it is here that the key role of *reflection* for relating the three moments of the concept is most self-evident. The middle term that is itself the unity of individuality and universality is not only the ground of mediation, but also implicitly the product of reflective activity itself. The individuality as “the complete, namely, posited with its opposite determination, universality” is an outcome of reflection that combines the given complete set of individuals together. When contrasting the present form of mediation with the corresponding one from the Syllogism of Existence, Hegel describes it as the “syllogism of experience,” while the earlier syllogism is referred



to as the “syllogism of mere *perception* or contingent existence” (WL690). By *experience* Hegel here means “subjective taking together of the individuals into the genus and of the conjoining of the genus with a universal determinateness” (WL 690). In other words, if the second mediational model in the Syllogism of Existence we had a mere “perception” of a specific determination of an individual, which was related to an abstract universal, now we are dealing with a complex process of comparison, reflection, abstraction in order to determine the complete set of individuals related to the universal property under consideration. Without this reflection, the middle term of the Syllogism of Induction—and thus the entire mediational structure—would not be possible. This is what renders the present model of mediation the canonical form of the Syllogism of Reflection.

By calling the given mediational model “Syllogism of Experience” and describing it as “subjective taking together of the individuals,” Hegel is clearly implying that the outlook under consideration is akin to *Empiricism*. But it is an empiricist model approached from the Hegelian perspective. On the one hand, we have the middle term as the syllogism that is composed of the externally conjoined individuals “indifferent” to one another. And on the other hand, we have the development of internalization of the universal moment within the individual. The former is the empiricist aspect of the model, and the latter indicates the direction toward Hegel’s own version of transcendental ontology. Clearly, the second aspect, the immanence of the universal to the individual, is artificial in the way it is presented in the present model. The reason is that the ontological presuppositions based on which the model is framed is not Hegelian but empiricist. The theme of

immanence of the universal to the individual moment is just an indication of the direction in which the *Syllogism* chapter will develop. Given the way things stand at this stage, the immanence of the universal to the individuals is attained only through coming up with a highly unusual conception of individual as a totality of entities sharing relatedness to the same abstract universal, while each individual entity by itself is only externally related to the universal, as well as to other individuals.

For a better understanding of the ontological model Hegel is presenting in the Syllogism of Induction, it is helpful to look at James Kreines's examination of the Hegelian notion of the immanent concept in counter-distinction to the empiricist stance. The position that Kreines in his *Reason in the World* associates with Hume (although acknowledging that it might not do full justice to the complexity of Hume's position and thus refers to it as "humean," with a lower-case 'h') and a contemporary metaphysician David Lewis is quite similar to the model discussed in the Syllogism of Reflection in general and the Syllogism of Induction in particular:

a 'humean' holds that all reality is composed of 'loose and separate' particulars or (now in Hegel's terms) mutually 'indifferent' particulars. There are no necessary connections, for example. .... So there are in particular nothing like immanent concepts in virtue of which certain effects must follow. Terminology from David Lewis' more recent humeanism provides a powerful image: 'humean supervenience' is 'the doctrine that all there is to the world is a vast mosaic of local matters of particular fact, just one little thing and then another.' (Kreines 2014, 70)

The individuality of the Syllogism of Induction, taken not as the collective individuality as presented in the middle term of the syllogism, but rather the

individual entities from which the middle term is composed of, is much like “individual tile” of Lewis’ humean account, the totality of which is making up a specific mosaic that could have been arranged in any other order. In both the Lewis-humean, as well as the Syllogism of Induction, models, the immanent connection between the individuals is lacking “nothing else is ever a reason in the world for anything else” (Kreines 2014, 70). The reason is externally imposed by “subjective taking together of the individuals ... with a universal determinateness” (WL 690).

At the same time, the peculiar kind of individuality presented as the middle term in the Syllogism of Induction introduces the key element that Kreines identifies as the Hegelian alternative to the empiricist approach.

What distinguishes anti-humeans, in general, is that they hold that the statement of a law does not refer to a pattern or regularity, and so to a great many particulars; it refers rather to something else that governs those particulars, and that is reason for any pattern or regularity in them. Generally this ‘something else’ will be something like universals, natural kinds, or Hegel’s immanent concept. (Kreines 2014, 72)

The immanence of the universal moment to the individual that is actualized for the first time at this stage in the syllogistic models is what Kreines correctly identifies as Hegel’s response to the empiricism. The notion of the universals that internally structure or “govern,” and thus “is the reason for any pattern of regularity” we observe in individuals, is the key Hegelian theme that will be developing further in the subsequent syllogisms. At this stage, the immanence is forced as it is not the individuals that are internally governed by the universal, but the very peculiar kind of the middle term that is construed as individuality comprised of complete set of

actual individual entities. The reason for this, again, is that the ontological model that the Syllogism of Induction stands for is that of empiricism, hence Hegel's description of it as "Syllogism of Experience."

The empiricist background assumption is another problematic aspect of the present mediational model, and specifically the conception of universality in place. Hegel points out this flaw by describing it as "universality [as] only completeness" The idea is that the empiricist commitment to experience as the only source of knowledge renders generation of genuine universality impossible. As Kant had already pointed out in the Introduction to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, *universality* should not be mistaken for *generality*; the latter can be originating from experience but the former cannot:

experience never gives its judgments true or strict but only assumed and comparative universality (through induction), so properly it must be said: as far as we have perceived, there is no exception to this or that rule. Thus if a judgment is thought in strict universality, i.e., in such a way that no exception at all is allowed to be possible, then it is not derived from experience, but is rather valid absolutely a priori. (CPR137)

The middle term of the Syllogism of Induction that is aimed at embracing universality within itself through grouping of the totality of individuals will be able to furnish only generality, but not universality. This is what Hegel has in mind when claiming that no matter how exhaustive our set of individuals in the middle term is, in relation to universality it remains "only a perennial ought-to-be" (WL691). As we shall see, the universal moment of the concept is one that shall undergo the most

fundamental transformation as we progress through the syllogistic mediational models.

### 3.3) The Syllogism of Analogy

The next mediation mediational model, the Syllogism of Analogy, is a transitional point that sets the ground for the third stage of mediations, the Syllogisms of Necessity. Due to the nature of its middle term—the “universality that is the *reflection-into-self of a concrete*” (WL 692) —the Syllogism of Analogy takes one step further the internalization of the universal to the individual moment of the concept. Universality here is presented in the form of an individuality grasped through its essential nature. Hegel’s example of the present form of mediation is “The earth is inhabited / the moon is an earth, / therefore the moon is inhabited” (WL 692). Hence, although on the face of it the middle term is an individual entity, the earth here is taken as “a concrete-reflected-into-self” as universality. The universal under consideration—the *heavenly body*—is the essential nature of the earth and is functioning here as the middle term or the ground for mediation. The key development that takes place in this model is the complete internalization of the universal to the individual, and in this respect we are dealing with an important step taken toward the Hegelian transcendental ontology. At the same time, the internalization of the universal is only an initial stage. There remains much to be done in order to arrive at Hegel’s standpoint, and the key direction is the further development and transformation of the nature of internalized universality.

Internalization of the universal to the individual at the point of transition from the empiricist standpoint to his own ontological model is an interesting topic to explore in light of the Kantian origins of Hegel's position. The key aspect of the Syllogism of Analogy that sheds light on the complex relation between the two philosophers' positions is the unity of the individual and the universal moments that is central to this model of mediation. The middle term of the syllogism is the individuality (the earth) taken as universality (heavenly body), and the entire mediation rests on the issue of unity between these two moments. A particular determination, in this case—being inhabited—that belongs to the middle term, is also attributed to the other extreme term—the moon as a result of the inferential mediation. Now, if the particular determination belongs to the earth due to its essential nature (granted that the essential nature is the heavenly body), then the conclusion will be valid. But the mediation fails since “the earth is inhabited [not] as a heavenly body in general” but “as this *particular* heavenly body” (WL 694). The key issue here is clearly the unity of the universal and the individual moments in the middle term and how exhaustively the former immanently determines the latter. The theme of the relation between universality and individuality is also one of the central threads of Hegel's critical appropriation of Kant's insights.

Kant in *the Critique of Judgment* presents the notion of an *intuitive understanding* as an alternative kind of intellect, in contrast to which he is highlighting the key characteristics of our discursive understanding. What makes this distinction relevant for our discussion is that Kant outlines the differences between

these two types of intellect in terms of the distinct ways in which they relate universality, particularity, and individuality:

Our understanding is a power of concepts, i.e., a discursive understanding, so that it must indeed be contingent for it as to what the character and all the variety of the particular may be that can be given to it in nature and that can be brought under its concept. Now all cognition requires not only understanding but also intuition; and a power of *complete spontaneity* [as opposed to *receptivity*] of *intuition* would be a cognitive power different from, and wholly independent of sensibility: thus a power of complete spontaneity of intuition would be an understanding in the most general sense of the term. Hence we can conceive of an intuitive understanding as well (negatively, merely as one that is not discursive), which, [unlike ours,] does not (by means of concepts) proceed from the universal to the particular, and thus to the individual. For such an understanding there would not be that contingency in the way nature's products harmonize with the understanding in terms of *particular* laws. (KU , 406)

The point here is that our understanding, being *discursive*, is capable of cognition only through concepts—universal and reflected representations. In other words, our understanding can only *think*, that is, relate to individuals mediately via concepts (as well as relate concept to one another), but not *intuit*, that is, grasp the individual immediately (only our receptive faculty of sensibility is able to afford us direct relations to individuals). In other words, our discursive understanding is incapable with its own resources of proceeding from the universal to the particular

and the individual; it needs receptivity that presents sensible intuitions in order to “proceed from the universal to the particular and thus to the individual” (KU 406).<sup>1</sup>

In both Hegel’s Syllogism of Analogy and Kant’s discursive understanding, the mediation between the universal, the particular, and the individual moments is unsuccessful and the nature of failure is identical. The key problem in both cases is the lack of mediated unity between the universal and the individual. In the Syllogism of Analogy, the unity of the universal and the individual moments found in the middle term is a mere “immediate unity” —only postulated but not grounded. Were we able to “proceed,” as Kant puts it, from the universal to the individual via the particular, the syllogistic mediation would be successful. The evidence of the similarity with the situation in the Kantian discursive understanding is that Kant’s explanation for the limitation of the discursive understanding can be directly cited here to explain the failure of the Syllogism of Analogy: “When cognition occurs through our understanding, the particular is not determined by the universal and therefore cannot be derived from it alone” (KU 406). Were the particular determinations of the individual middle term (the earth) fully derivable from the universal immanent to it (the heavenly body), the mediation would have been successful. The property of *being inhabited* could be validly attributed to the *moon*. But as is the case with the Kantian discursive understanding, so with the ontological

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<sup>1</sup> One thing to be noted here is that Kant in these passage is using not merely *universal* and *particular* as he typically does while referring to different kinds of representations, but the universal, the particular, and the individual—all three moments of the Hegelian notion of the concept. Considering these passages from the *Critique of Judgment* were one of the most commonly referred to by Hegel from Kant’s corpus, we can speculate that it is here that Hegel’s tripartite notion of the concept originates.



model presented in the Syllogism of Analogy, the nature of the failure is the universal's inability for self-particularization.

Reading the syllogistic mediational models in parallel with the Kantian juxtaposition of the discursive vs. intuitive understanding is helpful not only for a better comprehension of the nature of the problem at hand, but also for seeing the way to the Hegelian solution to it. Hegel thinks that Kant, when discussing the limitations of discursive understanding in the *Critique of Judgment*, had the key to the solution in front of his eyes and failed to recognize it. The intuitive understanding, which Kant presents as merely a negative example, for Hegel holds the potential of overcoming the problem of contingency in the relation between the universal and the individual, as Kant himself had suggested in the above-cited passage. The key to the solution is a different conception of universality, not the *analytic* but what Kant calls the *synthetic* universality:

Our understanding has the peculiarity that when it cognizes...it must proceed from the *analytically universal* to the particular (i.e., from concepts to the empirical intuition that is given); consequently, in this process our understanding determines nothing regarding the diversity of the particular. Instead our understanding must wait until the subsumption of the empirical intuition under the concept provides this determination...But we can also conceive of an understanding that, unlike ours, is not discursive but intuitive, and hence proceeds from *synthetically universal* (the intuition of a whole as a whole) to the particular, i.e., from whole to the parts. (KU 407)

Kant continues: "Hence such an understanding as well as its presentation of the whole has no *contingency* in the combination of the parts in order to make a

determinate form of the whole possible. Our understanding, on the other hand, requires this contingency" (KU 407). Thus, while the discursive understanding has to proceed from parts to the whole and is incapable of doing this without external input through sensible intuitions due to the *analytic* nature of its universality, the intuitive understanding that possesses the *synthetic* universality has no need for combining parts into a systematic whole, since qua intuition in it, the whole is given prior to the parts (here we arrive at parts by isolating the segments of the whole). At the same time, the intuitive understanding operates with synthetic *universal* and universality being the form of a concept for Kant, the synthetic universal of the intuitive understanding has the elements of both concepts and intuitions or universality and individuality. The synthetic universal thus offers what is lacking in the Syllogism of Analogy, i.e., the self-differentiation of the universality, and thus successful mediation between the particular and individual moments of the concept. And as we shall see, the promise that Hegel saw in this model presented by Kant as a merely negative example is the guiding thread of the development that shall take place in the third stage of syllogistic mediation: the Syllogism of Necessity.

Beatrice Longuenesse, while discussing the relevance of the intuitive understanding for Kant–Hegel relation, associates the intellectual intuition with the *Transcendental Ideal* from *The Critique of Pure Reason*:

In the first Critique, the Transcendental Ideal or the idea of a whole of reality, which ultimately becomes identified with the idea of an *ens realissimum* as the ground of all reality, is described as a concept that has not merely 'under it' but 'in it' the totality of positive determinations or realities by limitation of which all

empirical things could be completely determined. In the third Critique, intellectual intuition is contrasted with our own discursive intellect as thinking (and thus generating by its very act of thought) the whole of reality from a 'synthetic universal'... both the idea of a whole of reality (CPR) and the 'synthetic universal' (KU ) combine features of representations that has been carefully distinguished in the Transcendental Aesthetic of the first Critique" (Longuenesse 1998, 261-262)

The features of the representations that have been distinguished in the *Transcendental Aesthetics* and are re-combined in both the *intuitive understanding* and the *Transcendental Ideal* are of course *concepts* and *intuitions*, or the universal and the individual representations. The synthetic universal and the Transcendental Ideal as "the ground of all reality" clearly have much in common with the Hegelian notion of the universal moment of the concept, which as we have seen in the previous chapter, is the central moment of the concept in general. It contains its own particular determinations instead of being a product of an external abstraction from them; it is synthetic in the sense of generating content, which is not analytically extractable from the original determination; and it contains the system of determinations through which empirical reality is cognized. Hence, the Syllogism of Analogy, both with its model of mediation and the nature of the failure of this mediation, serves as a transitional point from the traditional ontological models examined in the Syllogism of Existence and the Syllogism of Reflection to the Hegelian transcendental ontology that will be emerging in the Syllogism of Necessity. Locating Kant's footprints at this very important transitional point is one more testimony of the deeply running continuous current between the Kantian and the Hegelian stances.

## 4) The Syllogism of Necessity

### 4.1) The Categorical Syllogism

The next and last set of mediations presented in the *Syllogism* chapter is the Syllogism of Necessity. Here, as Hegel claims, all three terms of the logical structure of the concept are pervaded by the same “essential nature” (WL 696.2, 697.2). Therefore, the problems of externality and presupposition of the conclusion that haunted the previous two sets of syllogisms are no longer present here. There can be neither fundamental externality between the moments of the concept, nor is there any need for presuppositions in order to relate the terms as each one of the terms is declared to be an expression of the same essence, “the terms, in keeping with their substantial content, stand in a relation to one another which is *in and for itself* identical; we have here *one* essential nature pervading the three terms” (WL 697). The determinate content-generating activity, the complete system of particular conceptual content, and objects individuated through them are no longer taken as ontologically distinct. For a better understanding of the model under discussion and key features, it will be helpful to relate it to some central theses of John McDowell’s position that, as he himself acknowledges, has been inspired by his reading of Hegel.

The key difference that sets McDowell’s position apart from the Sellarsian one that we have looked at above is his denial of the transcendental function to what he calls “the below the line” elements of experience.

Below the line in the Sellarsian picture of a visual experience, there is a complex or manifold of visual sensations, non-concept-involving visual episodes or states. Why does Sellars think the picture has to include this elements as well as conceptual episodes of the relevant kind? ... it is for transcendental reasons that we need to acknowledge the below-the-line element in the picture. The idea is that we are entitled to talk of conceptual episodes in which claims are ostensibly visually impressed on subjects – the above-the-line element in the picture – only because we can see the flow of such conceptual representations as guided by manifolds of sensations. (McDowell 2009, 23-24)

In other words, the objective purport of the conceptual content that subjects are through experience saddled with rests, according to Sellars, on them being “guided by” sensible manifold. It is this transcendental function of sensations that is absent from McDowell’s picture, and the reason for this is that the objective purport of the conceptual episodes is decoupled from them by McDowell. Hegel’s claim about the unity of the three moments, wherein not only the particular and the universal but also the individual are stated to be “invaded by the same essential nature,” meaning that the schism setting apart the conceptual from the sensory content is overcome, corresponds to the move McDowell makes when setting apart the “below-the-line” or “non-concept-involving” content from objective purport of determinations of thought. The individual that was formerly taken to stand with one leg in the conceptual and the other in the sensible is now understood as an actualization of the conceptual capacities. This is how we ought to understand Hegel’s claims that all three moments are imbued by the same essential nature and that the middle term is “not some alien immediate content, but the reflection-into-self of the determinateness of the extremes” (WL 695.4).

What McDowell calls the “transcendental” function of the sensible given—that is, the thesis that in order for thought to pass the master of objective purport or to be considered of objective reality its conceptual content has to be guided from the without, i.e., from sensible manifold or sheer receptivity—is removed from the picture in the Syllogisms of Necessity. This is what McDowell has in mind when claiming that Hegelian reason has no need for an external constraint, because it itself includes as one of its moments the receptivity that Sellars and Kant (according to Sellars’s reading of him) had attributed to sensibility (*Having the World in View* 39). The claim of the identical essential nature of the individual to the other two moments of the concept means that there is no content in the individuals that is heterogeneous to the determinations of understanding that make up the middle term of the syllogism.

At the other extreme, the activity of generation of determinations that carves out the logical space under consideration is related to the individual via the conceptual makeup of the middle term. The idea is that the relation of thought with the empirical realm is concept ladenness—thought relates to the world via the conceptual content available to it. This is in place both in apprehension of objects or when entities first enter our view, as well as when relating or making judgments involving already apprehended objects. As McDowell puts it, perceptual experience “contains” claims (HWV 30): “An ostensible seeing that there is a red cube in front of one would be an actualization of the same conceptual capacities that would be exercised in judging that there is a red cube in front of one” (HWV 30). Hegel explicitly connects the objective purport of the determinations of thought with

overcoming the schism between the determination of the three moments: “we have here one essential nature pervading the three terms, a nature in which the determinations of individuality, particularity and universality are merely formal moments. To this extent therefore the categorical syllogism is no longer subjective; in the above identity, objectivity begins” (WL 697.4). Hence, overcoming the schism between the moments of the concept brings the syllogistic structure to a whole new level of development; the conceptual content first occupies the center-stage of all three mediated moments of the ontological structure. The transcendental function of the sensible given is left behind, just like with the transition from the Sellarsian to the McDowellian stance, and what remains to be done in the rest of the Syllogisms of Necessity is fleshing out the results that have been attained with this move. This requires a more detailed examination of the nature of the relation between the moments of the concept.

Hegel does not give an example of the Categorical Syllogism, but he describes each one of the three moments in sufficient details to paint an adequate picture of the ontological model under consideration. The middle term that he describes as the *genus* stands in relation to one of the extremes—individuality as “the essential nature of the individual and *not just* any of its determinateness or properties” (WL 697). Hegel further specifies the nature of determinateness of the middle term as “the essential nature *as content*” posited as *totality* (WL 696). The middle term, therefore, should be understood as a systematically related network of determinations through which the essential characteristics of the individuated entities are conceived. The middle term as the essential nature, however, should not

be understood here along the lines of the Aristotelian *substantial form*, as the latter retains the elements of accidentality when mediating between an individual with its universal properties. Instead, as Hegel explains, the nature of the relation we have in place is that of necessity or concept-determination.

The categorical syllogism in its substantial significance is the first syllogism of necessity, in which a subject is united with a predicate through its substance. But substance raised into the sphere of the Concept is the universal, posited as being in and for itself in such a manner that it has for the form or mode of its being, not accidentality, which is the relationship peculiar to substance but Concept-determination. (WL 696.4)

This rejection of accidentality is indicative of difference from the Aristotelian model according to which, in addition to the determinations inhering in the individual through its substantial form, there are others that are mere accidental. For example, being mortal belongs to Socrates as belonging to the genus of man, but being sentenced to death by his fellow citizens does not. Now the ontological model under consideration is different from this due to the absence of the accidental element in the relation between the individuality and universality. There is no determination related to the individuality via the process of conceptualization that the universal moments stands for, which is not related to the web of conceptual content making up the middle term. What he calls concept-determination is a holistic constellation of inferentially related empirical concepts ever striving but never truly attaining full completion.



#### 4.1.1) Only the Middle Term is Fully Determined

While all three moments of the present form of mediation are identical due to the shared content of their “essential nature,” Hegel makes it clear that only the *middle term* presents this content in its fully determined form. At this initial stage of the Syllogism of Necessity, only the middle term is asserted to be “objective universality” (WL 696.3). This special status of the *particular* moment of the concept and the insufficient development of the *individual* and the *universal* ones is crucial for understanding the ontological model Hegel is examining here, as well as its shortcomings due to which he moves onto the subsequent relational structures. The systematically related constellation of empirical concepts that make up the middle term is placed here at the epicenter of the ontological model as the immanent structure of actuality. Both individuated entities that figure in perceptual experiences and the determination forming process of reflection are grounded on the middle term, which is the “reflection into themselves of the determinations of extremes” (695.4). In other words, the conceptual makeup that immanently structures reality is the ground of relation to the individual entities, on the one hand, and the content that the process of reflective activity operates with, on the other. This is another point where the proximity of the position under consideration with that of McDowell comes to the fore.

The basic commitment shared with McDowell is that the structure of actuality constrains the structure of thought. Paul Redding sees this as a clear evidence of McDowell’s Aristotelianism. Aristotle’s rejection of the Platonic ontological model of the two separate realms, one of ideas or true being and the

other of sensible finite entities or of becoming, is seen by Redding as mirrored in the move McDowell makes in relation to the widespread view amongst the contemporary philosophers, which can easily be traced back to Descartes and more immediately to Frege. “The Fregean view involved ‘a suspect conception of how thought related to reality, and ultimately suspect conception of mind’. On the Fregean view, the sense of a term is a possession of the mind that is unaffected by the fact that there may be nothing in the world to answer to it” (Redding 2007, 37).

The position being criticized assumes a “sideway-on” view that only a God could have. It postulates the transcendent perspective from which, on the one hand, is made possible to access the mind and its content, and on the other hand is gaining the view of the world directly bypassing the mind altogether. Both Aristotle and the McDowell, according to Redding, reject this “trans-realm” conception of philosophical vision and reject the decoupling of the mind from the world. The mind for them is not the “mythical repository” of autonomous content that stand unconstrained from the ultimate structure of experienced reality. Instead, the mind is rationally constrained by the world—the defining feature of the ontological model presented in the Categorical Syllogism. The middle term that presents the systematically related conceptual content as objective universality is the ultimate structure of reality that determines the extreme terms—the determination-generating reflective activity and the perception of individual entities. Hence, the ontological model presented in the Categorical Syllogism offers as its key feature the immanent structure of the world that has priority over the perceptual individuation of entities on the one hand and the determination forming process on the other.

#### **4.1.2) Universal moment as a principle of difference and mere immediate unity**

Hegel makes clear that, unlike the middle term, the other two moments of the present syllogistic structure are not full manifestations of the *determined totality* under consideration; moreover, it seems impossible to clearly define what exactly such a manifestation by individuality and universality in the present configuration would amount to. The insufficient development of the individual and the universal moments is the main reason behind the failure of attaining the fully mediated state of the concept; “this syllogism still continues to be subjective, in that the said identity is still the substantial identity or content, but is still not at the same time *identity of form*” (WL 697), and the middle term only possesses “positive identity, but is not equally the negativity of its extremes” (WL 697).

As such, while the middle term at this stage can already be described as the complete self-determination of the given essence that captures the totality of its content, the same cannot be said of the extremes. Although both universality and individuality are related to the middle term, the relation, however, is not of *mediated* but of merely *immediate* nature. In other words, there is a lack of grounding of the relation between the universal and the particular moment on the one hand and the individual and the particular on the other. In order to make sense of these claims, it is helpful to consider them on the background of McDowell’s position, which as I have claimed above closely resembles the model under consideration.

The key thesis advanced by McDowell in his influential work *Mind and World* is the direct perception of the conceptually structured world. He sees it as the only viable option to avoid the two bad alternatives: the myth of the given (the widespread positions amongst philosophers, especially those sympathetic to the empiricist tradition) and the frictionless spinning in the void (which is advanced by Donald Davidson in his attempt to overcome the problems associated with the myth of the given, but which has problems of its own according to McDowell). Instead of conferring to the environmental stimulus the causal function, as a result of which we acquire observational judgments, McDowell wants to maintain that we have the capacity to procure the *perceptual knowledge* via immediate access of the conceptually structured actuality. In other words, instead of experience standing in a causal relation to our beliefs and affecting conceptually articulated responses in us, it has to serve as a rational constraint, since only the latter can ground the normative role that experience plays for the objective purport of our beliefs. The rational “friction” with the world, which allows McDowell to walk the fine line between Scylla of the myth of the given and Charybdis of the Davidsonian spinning in the void, is provided by the direct perception of the conceptually structured world. Hence, perceived individuals, instead of effecting conceptually structured *observational* beliefs in us, already “contain” conceptual content. This distinction between the *perceptual* and *observational* knowledge allows McDowell to maintain that the former (the perceptual knowledge) affords us a direct access to the world.

Clearly, in this picture the key element is the differentiation between the perceptual vs. mere observational judgment. It is what allows McDowell to set his

position apart from that of Davidson. But it is not clear that McDowell's stance is free of problems, as Robert Brandom points out McDowell has difficulties with maintaining a clear distinction between the perceptual and observational judgments.

What sort of a fact is it that in some cases where we non-inferentially acquire a true belief by exercising a reliable disposition non-inferentially to respond to the fact in question by acquiring the belief there is a perceptual experience present, while in others there is not? How would we go about settling the question of whether the physicist has genuine perceptual experiences of mu mesons? Is there any way in principle to tell other than asking? And if we do ask, is there any chance that the physicist is wrong, because the physicist has been taught a bad theory? Could I think I was having perceptual experiences of mu mesons or the maleness of chickens when I was not, or vice versa? Do we know just by having a perceptual experience what sensory modality it corresponds to (so that the—supposed—fact that the chicken sexers get this wrong is decisive evidence that they do not have genuine perceptual experiences)? The answers to questions such as these determine just how classically Cartesian McDowell's notion of perceptual experience is—and so, from my point of view, just how suspicious we should be of it. (Brandom 2002, Reading McDowell, 100)

The difficulty in McDowell's position that Brandom is pointing out here is of exactly the same nature as the one we are dealing with in the ontological model of the Categorical Syllogism. The system of determinate conceptual content is asserted as the ground of actuality by being presented as the middle term of the syllogism, but its relation to perceptual experiences of individuals is merely postulated, not well justified. While McDowell maintains that the conceptually structured world is

directly perceived by us, it is not clear on what grounds he can argue that any specific non-inferentially acquired conceptual content does better justice to the world than any other, granted that we have no other source of objective purport than perceptual experience itself.

As with McDowell's position, just like with the ontological model Hegel considers in the Categorical Syllogism, the relation between the particular and the individual moments of the concept lacks justification—this is the meaning in the Hegelian technical vocabulary of the critical point raised by Brandom against McDowell in the above-cited passage. Brandom, however, does not merely place his finger on the problematic aspect of the ontological model under consideration, he also points out a way toward a solution. What appears to be the ultimate ground of objective purport of the given beliefs is not finding oneself in a state of being in possession of some conceptually articulated beliefs, but through drawing inferences from the given conceptually structured perceptual episodes, deciding how well it squares with other beliefs we hold, and in general engaging in the social practice of giving and asking for reasons.

Thus, with the ontological model of the categorical syllogism, just like with the McDowellian version of it, the lack of mediation or mere postulation of the unity of the moments constitutes the key problem that needs to be addressed. Hence, what remains to be done is to transform the immediateness of the relation between the middle term and the extremes to *mediated* unity. This would mean reworking of the present conceptions of the individual and the universal moments and putting

forth a relational structure in which all three moments are fully mediated with one another. This would mean, in the McDowellian version of the model, not a mere postulation of the rational constraint via perceptual experience but offering a well-grounded account of how the individuated entities are related to the conceptual framework on the one hand and how both of these are related to the process of generation of determinations on the other. This will be accomplished through the development that takes place in the remaining part of the Syllogism of Necessity; the very same posited totality found at the present stage only in the middle term will be developed in the extremes as well.

#### **4.2) The Hypothetical Syllogism**

The theme of the relationship between the individual and the particular moments of the concept comes to the center of attention in the Hypothetical Syllogism in the form of the relation between the diversity of individuals and the inner substantial identity that underlies them. The syllogistically expressed ontological model has the following form: “If A is, then B is / But A is / Therefore B is.” The major premise of the syllogism is the hypothetical judgment described by Hegel in the following words: “The relation of the hypothetical judgment is necessity or inner *substantial identity* associated with external diversity of existence, or mutual indifference of being in the sphere of Appearance—an identical *content* which forms the internal basis” (WL 699). It is natural to think of the two sides of the relationship as the former standing for the conditioned and the latter for the

condition. But Hegel's picture is more complex; he wants to sublate the rigid division between the essential, the more important moment on the one hand and its manifestation on the other. In the hypothetical judgment (the major premise of the present syllogism), either side can be taken both as the condition and the conditioned (WL 699).

Clearly, here the central difficulty of the previous model—the relation between the particular and the individual moments of the concept—is being re-examined by Hegel from a different angle. On the one hand, “the inner, abstract” side can be seen as the conditioning that stands behind its manifestation in the multiplicity of individuals. On the other hand, though, the separate, scattered appearances of individuals can be described as the conditions for the manifestation of the genuine reality that is revealed through them. One way to think of this relation is to compare it with the way physicists typically conceive of a force (for example, electromagnetic or gravitational force). We can think of the force as the underlying essential reality that manifests itself through a series of appearances, which is the effect it has on the observable object. In this sense, the interior, the invisible is the essential, while the exterior and the observable the unessential. On the other hand, however, we can also think of the series of appearances as the essential aspect of reality and reduce existence to what manifests itself to us; in this case, the postulated force is a mere theoretical hypothesis and the only reason that we come to posit its existence is the series of appearances observed. Hence, in the hypothetical syllogism through its major premise, the hypothetical judgment, the theme of the relation between the individuals and the particularity as determinate



*“content which forms the internal basis”* is introduced and their mutual *“indifference”* is put in question. In other words, Hegel is focusing on the crucial flaw of the previous model, the theme of the relation between the particularity and the individuality, and is clearly paving his way toward overcoming the insufficient degree of mediatedness between them.

The relation between the condition and the conditioned and complexities involved with this is a prominent theme for the Hegelian system in general. In gaining a better understanding of it, it might be helpful to look at one example of how the condition vs. conditioned interrelatedness is played out, namely the relationship between the theoretical vs. practical stance. “In the theoretical attitude, we attempt to ‘make’ the objective subjective; and in the practical attitude, we attempt to make subjective objective” (Pippin 1989, 134). While the practical philosophy can be seen as a translation of the inner, the subjective into the outer, the objective; thus, the inner is the condition and the outer the conditioned. Within the theoretical stance, the objective reality presents the conditions that are being internalized. Hegel’s overall position is that the very same schema is in operation in two different guises in these stances, “The distinction between thought and will is simply that between theoretical and practical attitudes, but they are not two separate faculties; on the contrary, the will is particular way of thinking” (PR, par4 35). This positing of the identical schema in operation in both of these stances undermines the traditional rigid distinction between them and is clearly related to the sublation of the distinction between the condition and the conditioned that is taking place in the Hypothetical Syllogism. The re-description of the relation

between the theoretical and practical attitudes as a manifestation of the very same schema operating in two different modalities is related to the overcoming of the schism between the individual and particular moments of the concept—in the Categorical Syllogism, the particular moment occupied the pride of place of the ontological ground, hence the condition, while the individuality was the conditioned. In the present model, the distinction between the two is problematized, and individuality—just as much as the particular moment of the concept—is at the ground of the model under consideration. Just like with the theoretical vs. practical stances with the particular and individual moments of the concept, we also reach the realization of their identity, their mutual mediatedness.

The crucial difference between the Hypothetical Judgment and the Hypothetical Syllogism is that the nexus of relations between the conditions and the conditioned as presented in the former (which also is the major premise of the latter) is a mere potentiality still lacking *actualization*—the feature that is introduced in the latter. The schematic content of the nexus is a mere potentiality standing beyond the immediate being still requiring an additional element for actualization. This element is supplanted by the minor premise “A is” of the hypothetical syllogism, “The conditions are a scattered material that waits and demands to be used; this *negativity* is the mediating element; the free unity of the Concept. It determines itself as *activity*... This middle term is therefore no longer merely an inner necessity, but *necessity* that *is*; the objective universality contains self-relation as *simple immediacy*, as being” (WL 700). Hence, to the inner necessity

of the major premise, the minor one adds the missing element for its actualization—immediate existence.

Here Hegel is using an important element of his system without explicitly naming it—the notion of *true infinity*. Unlike the *spurious infinity*, which for Hegel is a mere endless reiteration of the finite, the true infinity is not extraneous to the finitude. Infinity is a process of self-relation that is immanent and in fact constitutive of any concrete finitude. Hegel describes the middle term of the preset syllogism, “A” as an “individuality as self-related negative unity,” but clearly it is not mere individuality as the middle term is already mediated with the particular moment and this is what renders it into a *self-related* unity. Thus, with the middle term and its “simple immediacy,” the true infinity enters the picture as the driving force of the actualization or the concretion of the nexus of necessity. The whole syllogism thus is acquiring the quality of self-related objective universality—the feature that will be further developed in the following model—the Syllogism of Disjunction.

Now, how does this move map onto the contemporary renditions of the ontological and epistemological models we have looked at above? As has been argued, some interesting aspects of the problems of the previous stage of mediation of the Syllogism of Necessity—the Categorical Syllogism—could be brought forth through the examination of Robert Brandom’s criticism of John McDowell’s position. In a similar vein, the development that has taken place in the present stage of mediation—the hypothetical syllogism—can be clarified by attending to some

important features of Brandom's own position, specifically those features that set him apart from McDowell.

One of the most fundamental disagreements between them, as Brandom sees it, is McDowell's insufficient appreciation of the role that our conceptual content generating activity plays in the individuation of the entities that figure in our perception experiences. McDowell's emphasis on the direct access of the conceptually structured reality, according to Brandom, ultimately commits him to positing the conception of the world populated by entities individuated prior to any conceptualizing activity on our part. Brandom is skeptical of this commitment of McDowell and wants to reverse the relation—it is not that our cognition grasps the conceptually structured worlds, but our conceptual content generating and applying activity is the condition of the possibility of both individualization of the entities that makes up the world, as well as the specific conceptual determinations (the fact that entities appear of being this and such kinds, having this and such properties, etc.) that structure the world that manifest itself to us.

This is exactly the move that is made in the Hypothetical Syllogism in relation to the Categorical Syllogism. The actualization of the relation between the individual and the particular moment is carried out through the universal moment of the concept. That is to say, the individuation of entities as instances of a given constellation of determinate conceptual content is conditioned on the conceptual content generating activity—the process of formation of determinations through which concepts are applied in judgments, inferences are drawn from doxastic

commitments, as well as the conceptual content of determinations used in judgments, the revisions are made to them in case incompatibility between two or more commitments arise, etc. In other words, if in the previous model the particular moment of the concept—a system of determinate conceptual content structuring reality—was granted the fundamental ontological role, now the move is made toward emphasizing the centrality of the conceptual content generating activity—the universal moment of the concept. It is only through the latter that the former is actualized and manifests itself as the immanent structure of reality.

This development clearly maps on the move Brandom makes in relation to McDowell, echoing the critical point cited earlier as captured by these words:

What sort of a fact is it that in some cases where we non-inferentially acquire a true belief by exercising a reliable disposition non-inferentially to respond to the fact in question by acquiring the belief there is a perceptual experience present, while in others there is not? How would we go about settling the question of whether the physicist has genuine perceptual experiences of mu mesons? Is there any way in principle to tell other than asking? And if we do ask, is there any chance that the physicist is wrong, because the physicist has been taught a bad theory? (Brandom 2002)

Brandom's distancing of himself from McDowell's position that mirrors the differences between the last two syllogisms can be described as a rejection of the Aristotelian stance regarding the primary locus of conceptual content and its replacement with a form of conceptual pragmatism. Instead of postulation of the conceptually structured world as the ultimate source of intentional content that is actualized in us as we come into "rational friction" with the world, the sources of

conceptual determination are to be sought in the practical activity of application of concepts in judgments, drawing inferences from them, and in general from the functional role of semantic content generating activities that are carried out in “the logical space of reasons, of justifying and being able to justify what one says.”

The conclusion of the hypothetical syllogism is “therefore B is.” Hegel explains that this is a manifestation of the B as having “its being through an other.” Here the central theme of the Hegelian transcendental ontology, self-relation, is brought to the fore one more time. B’s existence is grounded on the existence of A. But at the same time, the inner substantial identity that binds the two makes this relation to the other into a self-relation. The identity of the individual and the particular moments of the concept, “the absolute content of A and B are the same,” is not an immediate but a mediated identity, a unity that has been posited through “form’s activity”: “the difference of A and B is an empty name. Thus it is a unity reflected into itself—hence and *identical* content; and it is so not merely *implicitly* but it is also *posited* as such through this syllogism” (WL 701). As it has been argued in the previous chapter, Hegel is using the Kantian notion of the universality as the form of concepts. Here in the Hypothetical Syllogism, as we have seen above, the mediation between the individual and the particular moments has been accomplished via the universal moment. Hence, in the passage just quoted, Hegel is tying the self-relation that obtains between the moments of the concept with universality or “form’s activity.” This is an important thesis that will be further elaborated in the subsequent syllogistic model—the universal moment as the ground of the self-relational structure of the concept. I will present a more detailed

analysis of this crucial feature of the Hegelian transcendental ontology in the following section, where a more comprehensive account of the self-relational structure of the concept will be laid out. At this point, it is important to note a significant step taken in the present form of syllogism that sets the stage for the next and the final model of mediation—the overcoming of the clear-cut distinction between the contents of the three moments.

In the beginning of the Syllogisms of Necessity, all three terms were described by Hegel as “pervaded” by the same essential nature; the content of the moments, however, were not developed to the same degree. Now, not only is the clear-cut distinction between the two sides of the major premise (individuality and particularity) problematized in regard to the issue of which is the condition and which the conditioned, or cause vs. effect, ground and consequence, but also the middle term—A is declared to have the same absolute content as B (WL 700). In other words, the content given in individuals has no element that is not reducible to the system of empirical conceptual determinations that make up the particular moment of the concept. Moreover, the universal moment that is the conceptual content generating and applying process guided by the determinations of reflection plays the mediating role between the individual and the particular moments. That is, instead of the mind passively acquire the specific content caused by the perceived individual, it is actively engaged in determination of its conceptual content. The mediation goes the opposite direction as well—the universal moment is not only engaged in determining the individual by means of the constellation of the concepts available to it, but it also is the process through which conceptual determinations

are generated and revisions made based on the individuals entities encountered in experience and the doxastic endorsements and inferential commitments they result in.

This mutual dependence of the individual and the particular moments of the concept, and the function that the universality plays in it, have clear resemblance with the Kantian determinative and the reflective judgment. In the former case, it is the concept that is at hand and the individual is to be subsumed under it; in the latter, individual intuitions are presented to the mind, which searches for the concept through which they can be determined. Kant's and Hegel's positions are closer here than is often taken to be. Some commentators have read Kant as discriminating between two types of judgments, *determinative* and *reflective*, as two different modalities of operation of the mind. But as Longuenesse has convincingly shown, these are not two different, but instead the very same, activity of the mind—although with two different outcomes. In the former, the individual is subsumed under a concept, while in the latter the very same process of searching for a concept fails: “They [reflective judgments] differ in this regard from other judgments related to the sensible given, which are not *merely* reflective, but determinative *as well*. What makes judgments *merely* reflective is that in them the effort of the activity of judgment to form concepts *fails*” (Longuenesse 1998, 164). Hence, the Kantian picture of the process of reflection that related concepts and intuitions has much in common with the Hegelian model of the universal moment as the actualization of the relation between the individual and the particular moments of the concept.



### 4.3) The Disjunctive Syllogism

The Kantian norm Hegel uses to evaluate the ontological models in the *Syllogism* chapter states that the moments of the concept ought to be not merely related to one another, but their relation should also have the nature of self-relation. This norm, as we have seen, has not been met by any of the alternative models discussed so far. Only the last model considered by Hegel, the Disjunctive Syllogism, does justice to this criterion. As Hegel puts it, in the Disjunctive Syllogism the three moments of the concept—universality, particularity, and individuality—attain the state in which “the distinction of mediating and mediated [as well as form and content, ... ] has disappeared” (WL 703). Hence, the Disjunctive Syllogism, the last ontological model presented in the *Syllogism* chapter, lays out Hegel’s vision of the basic structure of actuality. It is the culminating point of the development taking place in the *Syllogism* chapter that can be best described as the epigenesis of the logical structure of the concept—the development through which the concept attains “its positedness” (WL704).

One of the most distinctive features that set the disjunctive syllogism apart from all others is that it has the middle term in both premises and conclusion. The syllogism is presented in two different versions: “A is either B or C or D / But A is B / Therefore A is neither B nor C” and “A is either B or C or D / But A is neither C nor D / Therefore A is B.” Either one of these versions presents the middle term, A, as the subject in both the major and the minor premises, as well as in the conclusion.

Overall, the middle term comes to the fore as embodying the totality of the concept, representing all three of its moments. In the major premise, the middle term is universality, in the minor one it is particularity, and in the conclusion it is presented as individuality (WL 702). Each one of these components has significant implications and warrants a close examination.

The first premise, “A is either B or C or D,” presents “a universal, and in its predicate, the universal sphere particularized in the totality of its species” (WL 702). Thus, we have on the one hand the universal moment as the determinate content-generating process through which the particular ground-level empirical concepts are furnished and their content is revised. Once more, the major premise of the syllogism draws on the result of the previous form of mediation—the universality as grounding the particular moment of the concept. The middle term of the Disjunctive Syllogism carves out the logical—or, rather, the ontological—space within which the systematically related constellation of empirical concepts is generated: “As universality it is first the substantial identity of the genus; but secondly an identity that embraces within itself particularity.” Hegel uses the term *substance* and *Substantial identity* in a peculiar sense here, reflecting his ontological vision; it is declared to be “activity-of-form” of the possibility passing into actuality (par150, EL 225). Hence, the universality is the *substance* in the sense of the underlying ground or the condition from the activity of which its potentialities are materialized. What Hegel has in mind here is clearly the generation of empirical determinate content through the universal moment of the concept as the “creative power” (WL 556).

At the same time, as we already know from the development that has taken place in the Syllogisms of Necessity, the schism between the moments of the concept is overcome; therefore, the products of the universal moment of the concept cannot be different from it. This is what Hegel wants to bring home in the passages like the following: "When substance, as self-identical being-in-and-for-self, is distinguished from itself as totality of accidents, that which mediates is substance as *power*" (WL 557). If "the substance" stands for the underlying creating power, the determinate content generating activity, "the totality of accidents" that it furnishes is the determinations posited by the power. But as Hegel makes clear in this passage, the universal moment *needs to distinguish from itself* in order to be considered as merely the empirical concept generating activity, because at this stage in the development of the syllogistic mediational structure, the state of complete unity between the moments is attained. Hence, for Hegel, the totality of the constellation of the empirical concepts is identical to the process through which they are generated and revised. This thesis is deeply rooted in the Kantian heritage of Hegel's transcendental ontology. Recall Kant's dual notion of the concept as the unity of the act of synthesis, as well as the universal and reflected representation. The activity of the combination of the manifold on the one hand, and the determinate universal on the other in the Kantian account correspond to the empirical content generating process (the universal moment) and the totality of the determinations furnished through them (the particular moment) in the Hegelian account.

The identity of the two moments within the Hegelian account means the ultimate reducibility of the content of each one of the moments to the other. There

are no particular determinations of the systematically related constellation of empirical concepts that is not produced by and therefore also revisable via the determination furnishing activity. In other words, the totality of the content of the particular moment is posited through the universal one, which incorporates the immediacy of experience into the mediate system of empirical concept that it continuously forms, alters, revises, clarifies, etc. On the other hand, the universal moment, the activity of the empirical determinations generating process, is none other than the application of the very same empirical concepts that make up the particular moment. The universal moment of the concept is not some transcendent ground from which the content of empirical concepts is formed and altered. Instead, it is the process of application of these concepts itself, through which the inferential relations between different determinations are drawn through discerning the consequences and incompatibilities that a given doxastic commitment or conceptual content requires. Through experience, the systematically related empirical concepts are being applied, but every new episode of experience that adds bits of doxastic and inferential commitments implies transformation of the whole spectrum of interrelated empirical determination through an inferential chain of interdependencies. Hence, the universal moment is the continuously evolving process of application of the empirical concepts through which shaping and transformation of the content of these systematically interrelated determinations is taking place. Thus, the mutual dependency of the universal and the particular moments of the basic ontological structure that Hegel calls the *concept* is how we ought to understand the claim of their identity.

#### 4.3.1) Contrast with Bowman's Interpretation of Unity

When introducing the universal moment of the concept, Hegel described it not merely as a *creative power*, but as a *free* creative power. Freedom, however, for Hegel means “being with self in its other.” Hence, we can see that up to this point in the process of mediation between the three moments of the concept, *universality* has been free merely potentially. It is only in the Disjunctive Syllogism that it fully actualizes its freedom—as the rupture between the form and content, mediated and mediating aspects of the immanent structure of the concept, is overcome, and universality comprehends the totality of the particularization as identical to it. Universality, as the creative power, “is therefore the universal sphere that contains its total particularization” (WL 701). The unity between the dynamic and the static aspects of the Hegelian ontology is one of the central claims of Bowman's recent interpretation of the dualistic aspect of the Hegelian notion of the *concept*. The basic account of the static ontological structure is borrowed by Bowman from Rolf Horstmann's influential work on Hegel's ontology *Ontologie und Relationen*, which he synthesizes with the dynamic account of the very same structure as the source of all finite determination as presented in Dieter Henrich's works.

As my reading of the unity between the universal and the particular moments of the concept has demonstrated, the basic idea behind Bowman's project is indeed correct, as the moments of the concept are two sides of the same coin (one static, the other dynamic) and only with keeping this dual aspect of the Hegelian

*concept* can we gain proper understanding of him. But just as the overall thrust of his position is right, the specific account of the self-relational structure Bowman offers is mistaken. The determinations of reflection—identity, difference, ground—that Bowman describes as the “single complex rational structure” of the concept, in reality are the determinations of reflection or the basic functions guiding the conceptual content generating activity. This is the reason that Hegel presents them not in the Doctrine of the Concept but in the Doctrine of Essence. The dynamic part that Bowman discusses, on the other hand, relying on Henrich’s account, also belongs to the Doctrine of Essence and in fact is nothing but a close investigation into the structural elements of the determinate content generating process, which he earlier misidentified as the basic features of the Hegelian notion of the concept. Hence, his conclusion, “the Concept and absolute negativity are two sides of a single ‘speculative’ coin, one structural, one dynamic” is fundamentally misleading as what he has described as the immanent structure of the concept in reality is the set of the functions guiding “the dynamic” moment of the dualistic picture.

The unity of the dynamic and the static aspects, as my reading has demonstrated, is indeed fundamental to Hegel’s transcendental ontology, but it is not the identity of the concept on the one hand and dynamic process on the other as Bowman would have it. Rather, it is the self-relational structure of the concept itself and the unity between its moments. Indeed, if the self-relational unity is the fundamental feature of the Hegelian ontology, as Bowman claims, it ought to be located on the bottom floor of the ontological theory under consideration—it has to be discerned on the level of the *concept* (i.e., not the *essence* as Bowman would have

it). As my analysis in the last three chapters has shown, Hegel does indeed present such self-relational structure in the concept; moreover, this self-mediation is the defining characteristic of the concept unifying the dynamic element (the universal moment as the process of generation and revision of the systematically related empirical concepts that proceeds through incorporating experience within the web of these inferential interdependencies) with the static one (the particular moment as the constellation of inferentially interrelated empirical concepts generated through the dynamic moment) and the individual (the unity of the other two moments). As we have seen, the attainment of the complete mediation between these three moments of the concept has been the normative force behind the development that we have traced in the present chapter. Each new syllogistic model took us one step closer to the fulfillment of this criterion, which is fully met only in the Disjunctive Syllogism.

Having looked at the major premise of the Disjunctive Syllogism and the ontological commitment implied in it, I shall briefly outline the key aspects of the remaining parts of the mediational model under consideration. If in the major premise, the term “A” is subject, which is universal that in its predicate particularizes itself (WL 702.2), in the minor premise the same term appears as “determinate or as a species” (WL 702.2), which Hegel also describes as “the reciprocal exclusion of the terms” (WL 701.3). Here the very same term that was exhibited as *universality* in the major premise is *particularized* into determinations related by the inferential pathways. The totality of this conceptual content is making up the particular moment of the concept. If the focus of the major premise was the

self-differentiation of the universal moment as the creative power positing determinations, the minor premise offers a look at the nature of interrelatedness of the empirical concepts and role that this interrelatedness place in determining their content. The point is that the determinate boundaries of how things are is possible only through the inferential web of interrelations between the concepts that spell out the relations of necessary implication and incompatibility. The specific meaning of a given determination is constituted by the totality of the inferential relations it has with other determinations through which the necessary implications and incompatibilities are articulated.

Here Hegel is again tying the particularization with the third moment, the individuality. This particularly vividly comes to the fore in the conclusion of the Disjunctive Syllogism: "Further, this exclusion is not merely a reciprocal exclusion, or the determination merely a relative one, but it is just as essentially a self-related determination, the particular as the *individuality* to the exclusion of the others" (701.3). The already familiar theme of the individuation of entities via particular determination is brought to the fore again. One more time we are dealing with the Kantian insight (integrated within the complex architectonics of the Hegelian concept) that objects, instead of being given to the mind as already individuated, existing out there in the world as objects of this and such nature making up determinate furniture of the world, are conditioned by the conceptual content through which the mind relates to the world. Hence, both extreme terms of the Disjunctive Syllogism, particularity and individuality, are grounded on the universal moment that makes up the middle term of the final ontological model presented by



Hegel in the *Syllogism* chapter. The central thesis of the Hegelian transcendental ontology is that the conceptual content generating process is what grounds the particular determination and their meanings, as well as the entities individuated through them: “The extremes, in distinction from this middle term, appear only as positedness which no longer possesses any determinateness peculiar to itself as against the middle term” (WL 702).

#### **4.3.2) Ontology of Formal Logic**

With positing the universal moment as the middle term of the last mediational model, the dynamic nature of the Hegelian vision of the world came to the fore with its full force for the first time. Not only the complex empirical concepts through which we relate to the world, but even the most basic determinations, from which they are made up and which tie the empirical concepts and their content into a system of interrelated elements, are the products of the determinate content generating activity, a process that is neither merely mental, nor merely discursive justificatory or explanatory, nor merely practical and action guiding—rather, it is one that underlies and conditions all these. It is interesting to note in this respect the change that has taken place in the last three syllogistic models regarding the different implications they have on the laws of logic (in the traditional, not the Hegelian sense of the term).

Within the ontological vision that was expressed in the Categorical Syllogism, where the particular moment was given the central role, the validity of the laws of

logic was ultimately rooted in the structure of the world. By maintaining that the systematically related determinations that make up the particular moment of the concept constitute the basic structure of actuality, we were also implicitly granting the same status to the formal relation between these determinations. Hence, according to the model expressed in the Categorical Syllogism, our thought is bound by the laws of logic because they structure and describe the relations within the world; actuality is the source of normativity of the rules of inference. In the Hypothetical, and especially the Disjunctive Syllogism on the other hand, the center of gravity is shifting from the particular to the universal moment of the concept. What this means is that the laws of logic, instead of being anchored in the conceptually structured world that we somehow directly intuit, are an abstract and formalized version of the rules in place in the social practices of applying empirical concepts through which the process of generation and revision of their content is taking place. The laws of correct inference are the implicit rules guiding everyday social practices and made explicit in what Brandom has called “the language game of giving and asking for reasons.”

Paul Redding, in his article entitled “Brandom, Sellars and the myth of the logical given,” contrasts Robert Brandom’s Hegel-inspired stance with that of early Bertrand Russell regarding their respective position on the question of the origins of the laws of logic. Russell had put forth a position that Redding describes as *the myth of the logical given*, echoing that “What we believe, when we believe the law of [non-]contradiction, is not that the mind is so made that it must believe the law of [non-]con-tradiction. This belief is a subsequent result of psychological reflection, which

presupposes the belief in the law of [non-]contradiction. The belief in the law of [non-]contradiction is a belief about things, not only about thoughts” (Redding 2007, 60-61; Russell 1912, 88-89).

When it comes to the question of the ontological status of the laws of logic, Russell’s position has much in common with the model put forth in the Categorical Syllogism. While Brandom’s alternative is inspired by Hegel and shares the basic approach on the issue presented in the Hypothetical and more explicitly in the Disjunctive Syllogism, for both Hegel and Brandom the basic laws of inference, rather than being given to us as some form of transcendent metaphysical substructure of being, are the immanent element in the patterns of social practices from which emerge the determinate conceptual content and the normative force of the formal relations between its elements. This shift from the objective to the subjective side as the fundamental locus of the laws of logic reminds us one more time of the Kantian origin of Hegel’s position, as Paul Redding puts it in his comparison of Hegel’s Kantian stance with Russell’s Aristotelian one:

With this, then, Russell, following Moore, had reverted to a position closer to Aristotle’s representationalist interpretation of the logical categories than to Kant’s. For Aristotle, it would seem, the categories reflected in the logical behaviour of our words reflect structures properly belonging to being, while for Kant the worldly structures – in the sense of the way that they are for us – reflect the logical structures of our judgements. (Redding 2007, 61)

At the end of the Syllogism chapter we are presented with the Hegelian vision of these “worldly structures,” which Kant had traced to the logical forms of our

judgment. But in Hegel's hands, they are no longer anchored within the Kantian psychologism. While the Syllogism chapter of the *Logic* is the culmination of the project announced by Kant in the *Critique of Pure Reason*—replacing metaphysics with logic, that is, tracing the basic determinations of reality to the unified self-relational structure of thought, the nature of this self-relational structure has undergone radical reinterpretation as I have demonstrated. Hegel sees the relation between empirical multiplicities of the phenomena we find in the world, the determinate conceptual content on which our cognitive and practical relation to it stands, and the continuous process of application and revision of this content to the empirically experienced reality (the process guided by the determinations or reflection presented in the logic of essence) as the three moments of the holistic self-relational onto-logical structure that constitutes the most basic schema of Hegel's transcendental ontology.

The process of fundamental reformulation of the traditional metaphysics into the transcendental ontology driven by the Kantian principle of self-relational unity that I have retraced here culminates in the ontological outlook that is far from its widespread misinterpretation. The thesis that Hegel's system integrates within itself the totality of the world from the ordinary mundane object to the abstract logical forms of inference, from the religious practices of Hindus to Kant's categorical imperative, etc., ought not to be understood as a claim to present an exhaustive list of the totality of phenomena, an encyclopedia of every single entity making up the furniture of the world. Instead, Hegel presents the schema of the interrelation of the activity (in both theoretical and practical senses of the term, or thought and deed),

the determinations furnished through it, alongside the logic structure of individuated entities that rests on these. Hence, the concept and its self-relational schema presented in the Syllogism section instead of mirroring the world immanently constitutes it; or, the order that we find in the world instead of being given, is constituted.

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